CHICAGO CUBS YEARBOOK

Longest-Tenured Cubs

2020

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AN UNPRECEDENTED SEASON

#WhereStoriesPlay

Cubs players participate in July Summer Camp at Wrigley Field.

Opening Day at the Friendly Confines is something truly special. Considered an annual family reunion and unofficial holiday by many, the return of Cubs baseball typically means we've weathered another Chicago winter, welcomed the arrival of spring and are ready to embrace new beginnings. Needless to say, the 2020 season has been unlike any we've ever experienced.

With the opening of every campaign, we roll out a brand new *Cubs Yearbook* that we prepare throughout Spring Training. We were close to putting the finishing touches on this year's edition; then everything changed when the pandemic began and brought our world, lives and favorite pastime to a halt.

With the return of Major League Baseball, we're excited to bring you the 2020 *Cubs Yearbook*. Using a great deal of content we produced heading into the season, this year's version includes in-depth interviews with Executive Chairman Tom Ricketts, President of Baseball Operations Theo Epstein, new manager David Ross and much more. While a lot of the content is current, recent player personnel moves and changes to the major league season are not addressed.

We recognize what a difficult time this has been for everyone. The pandemic has created unparalleled public health challenges and profoundly impacted our way of life, our families and our communities. Our hearts go out to the individuals and families affected by the virus, and we extend our deepest gratitude to those on the front lines for their tireless, life-saving work.

Times like this remind us that life is bigger than sports, but we also recognize that sports can be a part of the solution. By using our resources and communication platforms, as well as the talent and generosity of our players and associates, the Cubs and Cubs Charities have been able to contribute funds to a variety of COVID-19 relief efforts, support the heroes working on the front lines, help food-insecure families, and keep us connected and united during this difficult time.

As we all do our part to fight the spread of COVID-19, we hope you are staying safe and healthy. During this ever-changing, challenging time, it is critical we do what we do best — rally together. Until we can get our entire family back together at the Friendly Confines, please follow all the action at Cubs.com, on our social media channels and on Marquee Sports Network.

Sincerely,

The Chicago Cubs

Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot joins the Cubs to announce the team's partnership with Lakeview Pantry to help keep up with the increased number of residents seeking food assistance as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

acer

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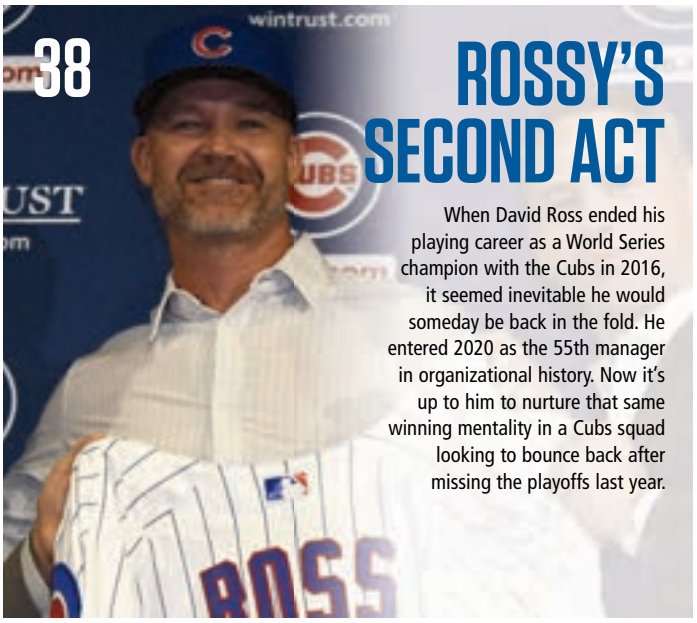

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ROSSY'S SECOND ACT

When David Ross ended his playing career as a World Series champion with the Cubs in 2016, it seemed inevitable he would someday be back in the fold. He entered 2020 as the 55th manager in organizational history. Now it's up to him to nurture that same winning mentality in a Cubs squad looking to bounce back after missing the playoffs last year.

DAVID BANKS/GETTY

GAME FACE

68

When Jon Lester signed his Cubs contract in 2014, the team still had a reputation as "lovable losers." The 36-year-old veteran has helped shift the culture of the organization and end a 108-year World Series curse. Entering the sixth season of his contract, Lester continues to set new standards for excellence in Chicago.

JONATHAN DANIEL/GETTY

TOP-DOWN APPROACH

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Fans went into the offseason predicting major changes to the Cubs organization. They got them, but it wasn't where they expected. This winter, the front office made significant behind-the-scenes coaching and personnel moves they're hoping will have a major impact in 2020.

STEPHEN GREEN

SOMETHING TO PROVE

When Theo Epstein arrived in Chicago, he rebuilt the baseball operations department from the ground up. But that was eight years ago. In this game, eight years can be a lifetime. Epstein has again made big changes to keep pace in a rapidly transforming industry and to help his talented squad rediscover its 2016 swagger.

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ALEX TRAUTWIG/GETTY

RAISING EXPECTATIONS

Tom Ricketts famously set three goals for his family's ownership of the Cubs. Entering 2020, they're batting 1.000. The Cubs have won a World Series, Wrigley Field looks better than ever, and the team has a great relationship with the community. We talked to the Cubs chairman about why there's still plenty of work to do on the North Side.

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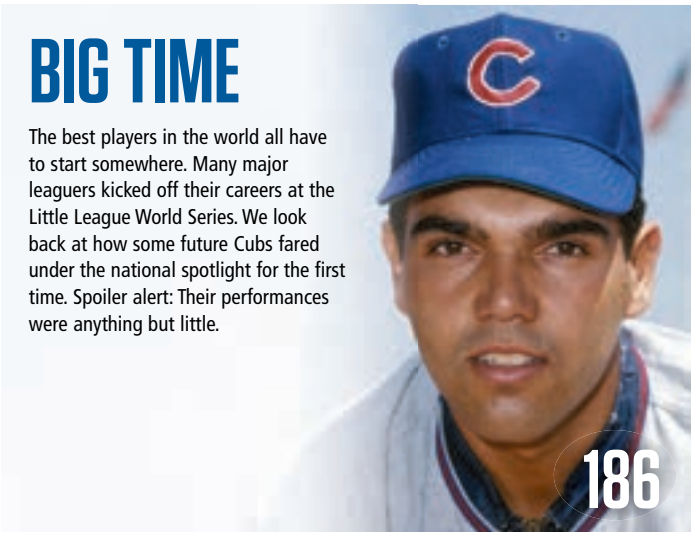
A HERO ON AND OFF THE FIELD

Most people know Anthony Rizzo as an All-Star first baseman, Platinum Glove winner and World Series champion. But to kids battling cancer, he's much more than that. A cancer survivor himself, Rizzo has dedicated his time off the field to helping kids and families battle the disease.

STEPHEN GREEN

BIG TIME

The best players in the world all have to start somewhere. Many major leaguers kicked off their careers at the Little League World Series. We look back at how some future Cubs fared under the national spotlight for the first time. Spoiler alert: Their performances were anything but little.



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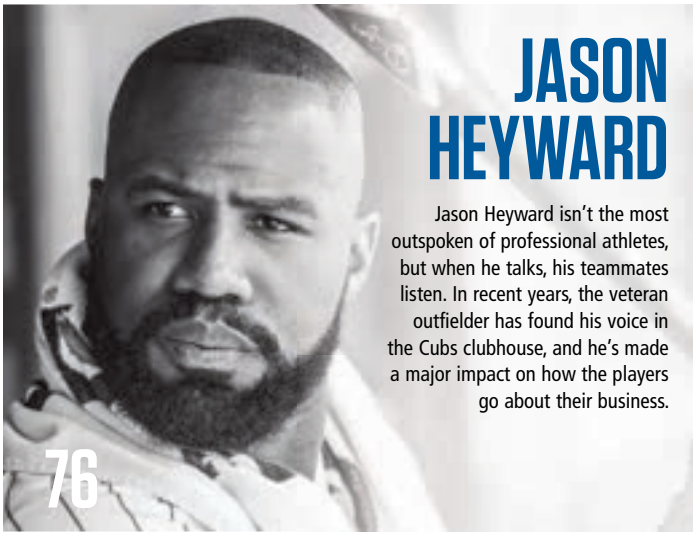
COURTESY CHICAGO CUBS



JASON HEYWARD

Jason Heyward isn't the most outspoken of professional athletes, but when he talks, his teammates listen. In recent years, the veteran outfielder has found his voice in the Cubs clubhouse, and he's made a major impact on how the players go about their business.

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STEPHEN GREEN

WRITTEN IN THE STARS

The first major league All-Star Game was held at Comiskey Park in 1933. Since then, Cubs players have captured MVP awards, won the Home Run Derby and factored heavily in several outcomes. We catalog the top Cubs performances from nearly nine decades of Midsummer Classics.

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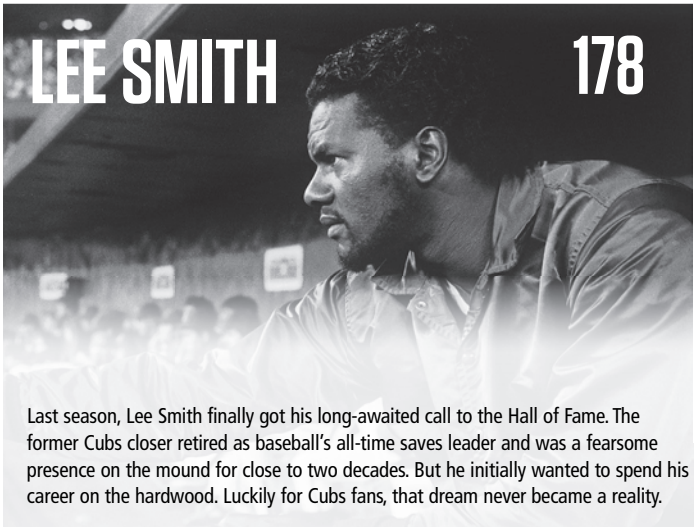

LEE SMITH

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Last season, Lee Smith finally got his long-awaited call to the Hall of Fame. The former Cubs closer retired as baseball's all-time saves leader and was a fearsome presence on the mound for close to two decades. But he initially wanted to spend his career on the hardwood. Luckily for Cubs fans, that dream never became a reality.

COURTESY CHICAGO CUBS

THE SLUGFEST

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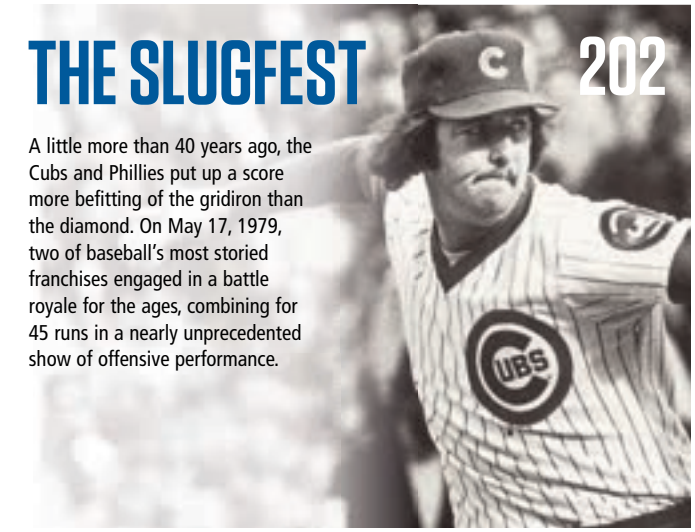
A little more than 40 years ago, the Cubs and Phillies put up a score more befitting of the gridiron than the diamond. On May 17, 1979, two of baseball's most storied franchises engaged in a battle royale for the ages, combining for 45 runs in a nearly unprecedented show of offensive performance.



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COURTESY CHICAGO CUBS

COURTESY CHICAGO CUBS

STEPHEN GREEN

CHICAGO CUBS

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RAISING EXPECTATIONS

Tom Ricketts continues to set a new standard for success on the North Side.

BY GARY COHEN

STEPHEN GREEN

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Let's take a quick look at how things around Wrigleyville have changed since 2009, when the Ricketts family took ownership of the Cubs.

Then: Despite coming off back-to-back division titles in 2007-08, the Cubs' veteran-laden roster had been constructed using old-school front-office philosophies and was on the decline by 2009. Even the middling success of the early-aughts couldn't change the fact that the postseason had been foreign territory for most of the last century.

Now: The Cubs are one of the legitimate blue bloods of the sport. They have played over-.500 ball for five consecutive seasons, have become postseason regulars and are still just a few years removed from banishing the franchise's demons by finally capturing that elusive World Series title.

Then: Wrigley Field was a grand old ballpark with some serious problems. The player facilities were the worst in baseball, there were literally nets to protect fans from falling concrete, and the bathrooms ... don't get me started on the bathrooms.

Now: Wrigley Field is a grand old ballpark complete with modern amenities. It looks better than ever and offers best-in-class player facilities for training and rehabilitation. Plus, the concourses are more spacious and provide a wider variety of services.

Then: The area around Wrigley Field was lovely, but the space immediately surrounding the ballpark had a concrete, industrial feel that didn't match the beauty and character of the neighborhood.

Now: The area around Wrigley Field is a gameday mecca, complete with dining options, a hotel and an outdoor plaza with year-round entertainment programming.

Put simply, the first decade of Ricketts family ownership has been a resounding success for the Cubs and their fans. That, of course, doesn't mean Tom Ricketts is satisfied.

"We won one World Series; now we've got to win more," Ricketts said. "The park is in really good shape, but it will never be finished because it's an old building, and every year there will be something else to fix. I'm really proud of the stuff we've done on the community side, both for the neighbors who live right around Wrigley and then for the entire city. I think we have made substantial progress on all those goals, but we have more to do."

STEPHEN GREEN

This February, we sat down with the Cubs chairman in Mesa, Arizona, to talk about his goals for the next decade of ownership, the realities of major league budgets and the state of the organization after his first decade at the helm.

> "People have pretty high standards for the team, and you want them to have high standards. You really want people to expect success, and when they don't get success, they're disappointed."

Cubs Yearbook: Your family has owned the Cubs for a while now. Do you still get the same charge out of it as you did when you first started?

Tom Ricketts: Yes. It's a passion. Those things don't go away. It's fun. I love coming here on the first day of Spring Training. The energy is great, and it just feels good.

CY: What's the biggest difference in the game since your family purchased the Cubs?

TR: I think a big shift, at least from my perspective in the game, is how much time is spent on the business of baseball now. People spend so much time talking about the collective bargaining agreement and how much players make. The players' salaries have gone up pretty substantially in 10 years, the payrolls have gone up in 10 years, and I just think it has become a bigger part of how people talk about the game.

CY: When you arrived, your family set out three goals. You've essentially accomplished them all at this point. Wrigley is restored, you've won the World Series, and you have a good relationship in the community. What does the next decade look like for the Cubs' ownership group?

TR: The first thing is to be consistent on the winning side. It was never our goal to just win one World Series and move on. We want to be like the teams that

> "It was never our goal to just win one World Series and move on. We want to be like the teams that seem to always be in the mix."

seem to always be in the mix. As much as we don't like the Cardinals as our archenemy, you have to respect the fact that they put out winning seasons year after year after year. We have to be one of those teams and be consistent and get our chance every year to make the playoffs. Once in the playoffs, anything can happen.

On the ballpark, I think it really is about maintaining it and trying not to let what happened to Wrigley before happen again. We have to really have a thorough maintenance plan and schedule and keep it up and keep investing as it goes, so you don't end up with the kind of mess that we inherited. That also goes into what's happening just outside — make sure that we're doing with Gallagher Way what we can to make the gameday better and just keep improving the fan experience. Then, on the community side, we think we might be looking for some bigger community investments at some point here in the near future. Something a little more substantial that we can really put our stamp on, but it's not there yet.

CY: The first eight years of your ownership were all about building and becoming a winner. Fans couldn't have been happier, but people get used to winning quickly. Do you feel like the dynamic has changed between your family and the fan base, or is that just a natural evolution?

TR: I think it's pretty natural. People have pretty high standards for the team, and you want them to have high standards. You really want people to expect success, and when they don't get success, they're disappointed. I think there was a period of time when Cubs fans were happy with any little hints of success, and now that's changed. People want to win, and we want to win too.

CY: After years of construction, the 1060 Project is now in the rearview mirror. How does it feel to finally have the major work on Wrigley Field completed?

TR: It feels great, and I give credit to all the people who put all the time in to do all the work, all the planning, all the execution, because it really had to come together. Literally, if you took our strategic plan from 2010 and read it, it happened. It happened on the field and off the field. It's just a great tribute to all the people that did all the planning and all the work.

CY: Obviously, you had a plan going into the restoration, but was there any way to really know what you were getting into?

TR: Well, I think you really can't know what you're getting into when you're repairing a 100-year-old ballpark. A lot of the work we did was work we didn't expect to do just because no one had ever looked at it. You take out a wall, and you find a piece of steel that's been compromised. Or you dig up the cement, and you find a footing for a steel pillar that isn't up to code anymore. So there were lots of surprises. There was no way to tell 100 percent, but ultimately it was just a matter of we were going to do what we had to do to get it right. Measure twice, cut once.

STEPHEN GREEN

CY: Is it a measure of pride for you that Wrigley Field is still standing when some of the other great ballparks — Yankee Stadium, for example — have fallen victim to the wrecking ball?

TR: It's a matter of pride that it's still standing. It's a matter of pride that it's still the ballpark your great grandfather would

STEPHEN GREEN

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recognize. And it's a matter of pride that it looks on the outside as good as it ever did, which we put it back to, like, 1935. It's authentic, and it's new at the same time.

CY: Pulling that stone off the walls at Clark and Addison was the right move.

TR: Oh, my God. It was hideous. Wrigley Field looked like an old parking garage in the winter. Now it's beautiful, and we'll keep it that way.

CY: Another major plan came to fruition with the launch of the Marquee Sports Network. Why is this something you wanted for the organization?

TR: There are a lot of reasons why this is right for the organization. First of all, and most of all, it's really right for the fans. We're going to have one channel that will be focused on the Cubs. We'll be able to do our own programming. We'll be able to put on all of our Spring Training games. We'll be able to bring in all of our own announcers. Basically, it's what Cubs fans should want in their sports network.

Secondly, it's great for the ballclub. Ultimately, this does give us a little bit more financial flexibility down the line, and it will be something that will help us. Like I've said before, if you want to run with the big dogs, you've got to play that game. If you want to be the Dodgers or the Yankees or the Red Sox, you have to do what is ultimately the best answer for the team financially as well. I think this is a great thing for the fans and will be a great legacy for us.

CY: Many people were expecting Marquee would immediately translate into more money for the team and that the Cubs would be major players for the Gerrit Coles of the world. Is that an oversimplified view of big league finances?

TR: As oversimplified as it can get. There are a couple of things. First of all, it will be a while before we really know the full financial impacts, and they're still at risk. This year, because we're getting a late start, it may not be something we can count on in 2020 — and, depending on what happens, maybe not in 2021. We just know over the long run, it should be the right answer.

> "When everyone sees [David Ross] out in front of this team, they're going to understand what his real story is. The guy is a winner, and there's an edge there."

Secondly, the way the league salary structure incentives are set up with the competitive balance tax, it's not optimal or logical or even possible to just spend as freely as people wish they could. It's going to be a help, but it comes down to getting the right people on the field and drafting and developing players.

CY: Even if you have more money coming in, those penalties still kick in if you're over the competitive balance tax.

TR: I think what people don't understand about the competitive balance tax is it's not just a financial penalty. It is a substantial financial penalty, but it's not just a financial penalty. You can lose draft picks and draft position. On top of that, the money you pay in gets redistributed to the other teams, so that's like a gift for the other teams. It's a lot more complicated than people know.

CY: A big story of the offseason was the lack of additions to the major league roster. Do you feel like the changes that were made behind the scenes, from a front-office and organizational standpoint, can make a difference on the field this year?

TR: We are investing in the future of the team in ways that aren't always obvious to fans. We brought in new personnel and restructured the baseball organization

STEPHEN GREEN

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STEPHEN GREEN

> "Success is about player development. It's about drafting the right guys ... and getting them to their maximum potential in the shortest period of time."

to have a focus on development. The paradigm has shifted a lot in baseball from "you get what you get when you draft a player" to "the player is still raw material when they come in, and you can improve them, and the right kind of training will make them better players."

We're toward the front end of that. We're not 100 percent on the cutting edge. Some other teams have been further ahead of us, but that's a big focus. Fans just don't get to see it. Ultimately, I don't know how many times you can say it and how many times it can be ignored, but success is about player development. It's about drafting the right guys, bringing them in the organization and getting them to their maximum potential in the shortest period of time.

Free agents are an admission of defeat — meaning you didn't develop your own player — and they're a very expensive admission of defeat that limits your flexibility in the future to bring in another one. Your worst dollars are spent on free agents, so you want to make sure you put those dollars to work as best you can. But, ultimately, it comes down to which team is developing players for themselves. That's the team that's likely to win.

CY: How do you assess where the organization as a whole stands heading into 2020?

TR: At the major league level, we have a known entity. We have veteran players who have won big games, and they know how to play the game. The exciting factor this year is they're going to be led by a guy who has the communication skills, the passion, the energy, and this overall leadership that our players will really respond to. I'm expecting big things out of our major league club because I just think we have the talent and the leadership.

The whole organization has been getting healthier as well. As you've seen, we've gotten a few more players in the top 100 prospects. Our player development, while maybe we didn't draft as well as we'd like to for the last seven or eight years, we're starting to really develop more players. You see some of those guys coming in here, people that we're pretty excited about for the future. That ultimately will determine if we're going to be competitive in five years, not who we sign.

CY: Joe Maddon was one of the most successful managers in Cubs history. Why is David Ross the right person to pick up the mantle?

TR: Joe obviously was a great manager for us and had a really good run here. Everyone would agree it was time for a change. The nice part about bringing in Rossy is it is a change. It really is a different type of energy. After five years of one type of strategy or one type of philosophy, I think the players are going to respond to a new philosophy. That's why I'm so optimistic about 2020.

What defines David Ross is competitiveness and a passion for the game that it can be hard to see from a fan perspective when he's just the backup catcher. When everyone sees him out in front of this team, they're going to understand what his real story is. The guy is a winner, and there's an edge there.

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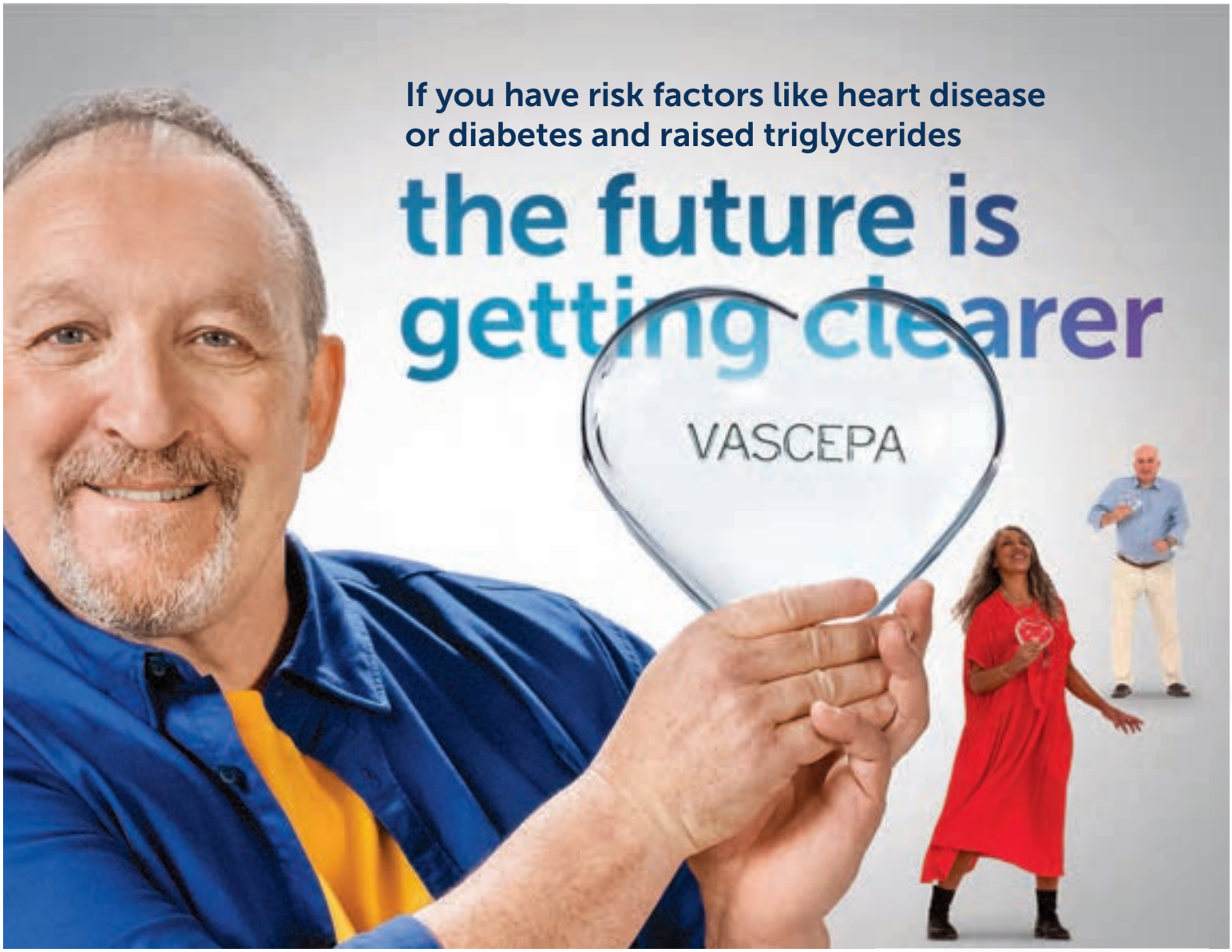

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- Heart rhythm problems (atrial fibrillation)

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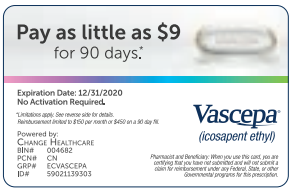
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VASCEPA is a prescription medicine used along with certain medicines (statins) to reduce the risk of heart attack, stroke, and certain types of heart issues requiring hospitalization in adults with heart (cardiovascular) disease, or diabetes and 2 or more additional risk factors for heart disease. It's also used along with a low-fat and low-cholesterol diet to lower high levels of triglycerides (fats) in adults.

It is not known if VASCEPA changes your risk of having inflammation of your pancreas (pancreatitis).

It is not known if VASCEPA is safe and effective in children.

Do not take VASCEPA if you are allergic to icosapent ethyl or any of the ingredients in VASCEPA. See the end of this summary for a complete list of ingredients in VASCEPA.

Before taking VASCEPA, tell your doctor about all of your medical conditions, including if you:
- have diabetes.
- have a low thyroid problem (hypothyroidism).
- have a liver problem.
- have a pancreas problem.
- are allergic to fish or shellfish. It is not known if people who are allergic to fish or shellfish are also allergic to VASCEPA.
- are pregnant, or planning to become pregnant. It is not known if VASCEPA will harm your unborn baby.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. VASCEPA can pass into your breast milk, and may harm your baby. Talk to your doctor about the best way to feed your baby if you take VASCEPA.

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and dietary or herbal supplements.

VASCEPA can interact with certain other medicines that you are taking.

Especially tell your doctor if you take medicines that affect your blood clotting (anticoagulants or blood thinners).

How should I take VASCEPA?

- Take VASCEPA exactly as your doctor tells you to take it.
- Do not change your dose or stop taking VASCEPA without talking to your doctor.
- Do not take more capsules than what is prescribed by your doctor.
  - If you are prescribed the 0.5 gram capsules, you should not take more than 8 capsules each day with food.
  - If you are prescribed the 1 gram capsules, you should not take more than 4 capsules each day with food.
- Take VASCEPA capsules whole. Do not break, crush, dissolve, or chew VASCEPA capsules before swallowing.
- If you miss a dose of VASCEPA, take it as soon as you remember. However, if you miss one day of VASCEPA, do not double your dose when you take it.
- Your doctor may start you on a diet that is low in saturated fat, cholesterol, carbohydrates, and low in added sugars before giving you VASCEPA. Stay on this diet while taking VASCEPA.
- Your doctor may do blood tests to check your triglyceride and other lipid levels while you take VASCEPA.

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VASCEPA may cause serious side effects, including:
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- **Possible allergic reactions if you are allergic to fish or shellfish.** Stop taking VASCEPA and tell your doctor right away or get emergency medical help if you have any signs or symptoms of an allergic reaction.
- **Bleeding.** Serious bleeding can happen in people who take VASCEPA. Your risk of bleeding may increase if you are also taking a blood thinner medicine.

If you have liver problems and are taking VASCEPA, your doctor should do blood tests during treatment.

The most common side effects of VASCEPA include: muscle and joint pain; swelling of the hands, legs, or feet; constipation; gout; and heart rhythm problems (atrial fibrillation).

These are not all the possible side effects of VASCEPA. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

How should I store VASCEPA?

- Store VASCEPA at room temperature between 68° to 77° F (20° to 25° C).
- Safely throw away medicine that is out of date or no longer needed.

Keep VASCEPA and all medicine out of the reach of children.

General information about the safe and effective use of VASCEPA. Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Patient Information leaflet. Do not use VASCEPA for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give VASCEPA to other people, even if they have the same symptoms that you have. It may harm them. You can ask your pharmacist or healthcare provider for information about VASCEPA that is written for health professionals.

What are the ingredients in VASCEPA?
Active ingredient: icosapent ethyl
Inactive ingredients: tocopherol, gelatin, glycerin, maltitol, sorbitol, and purified water

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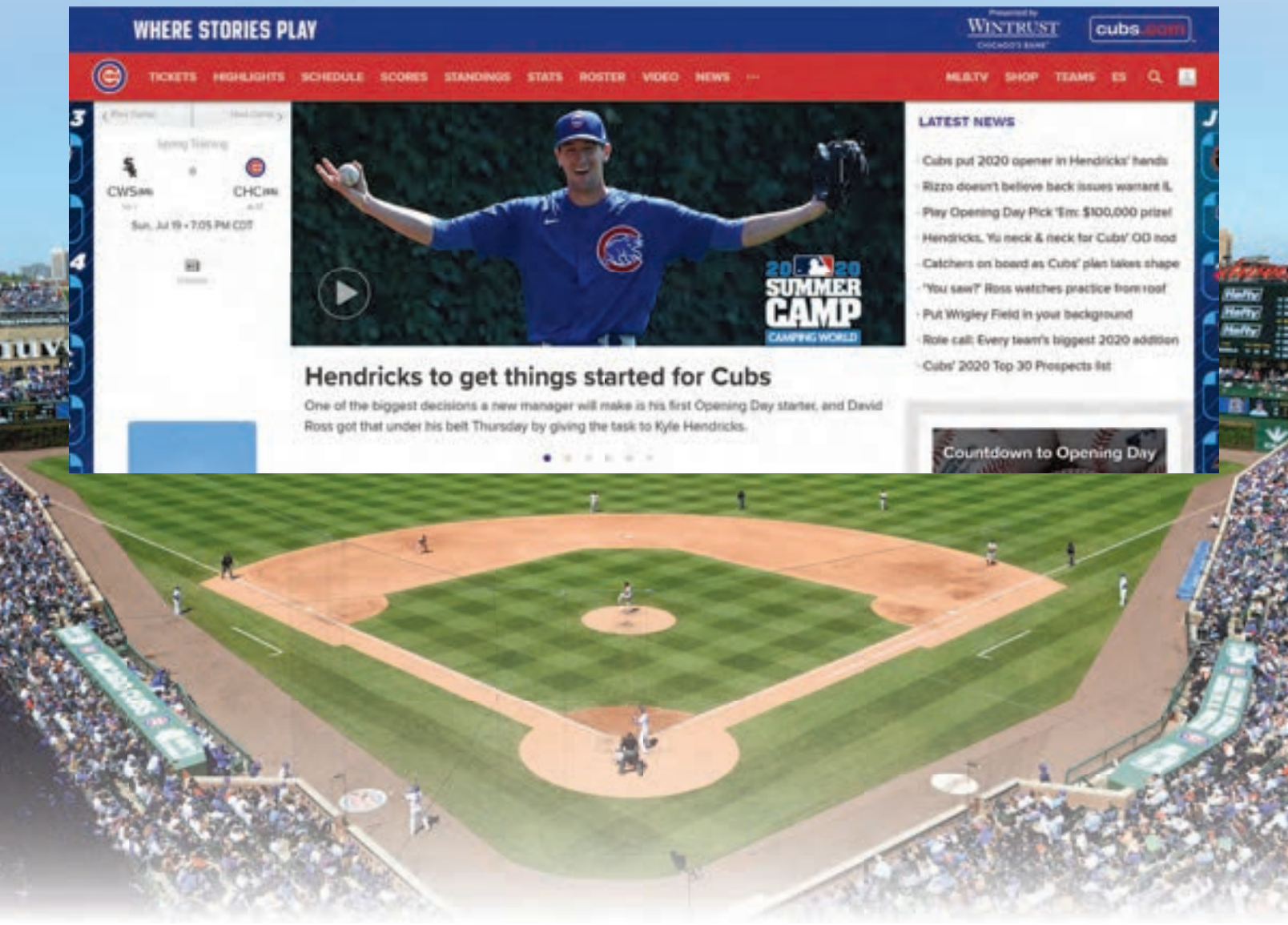
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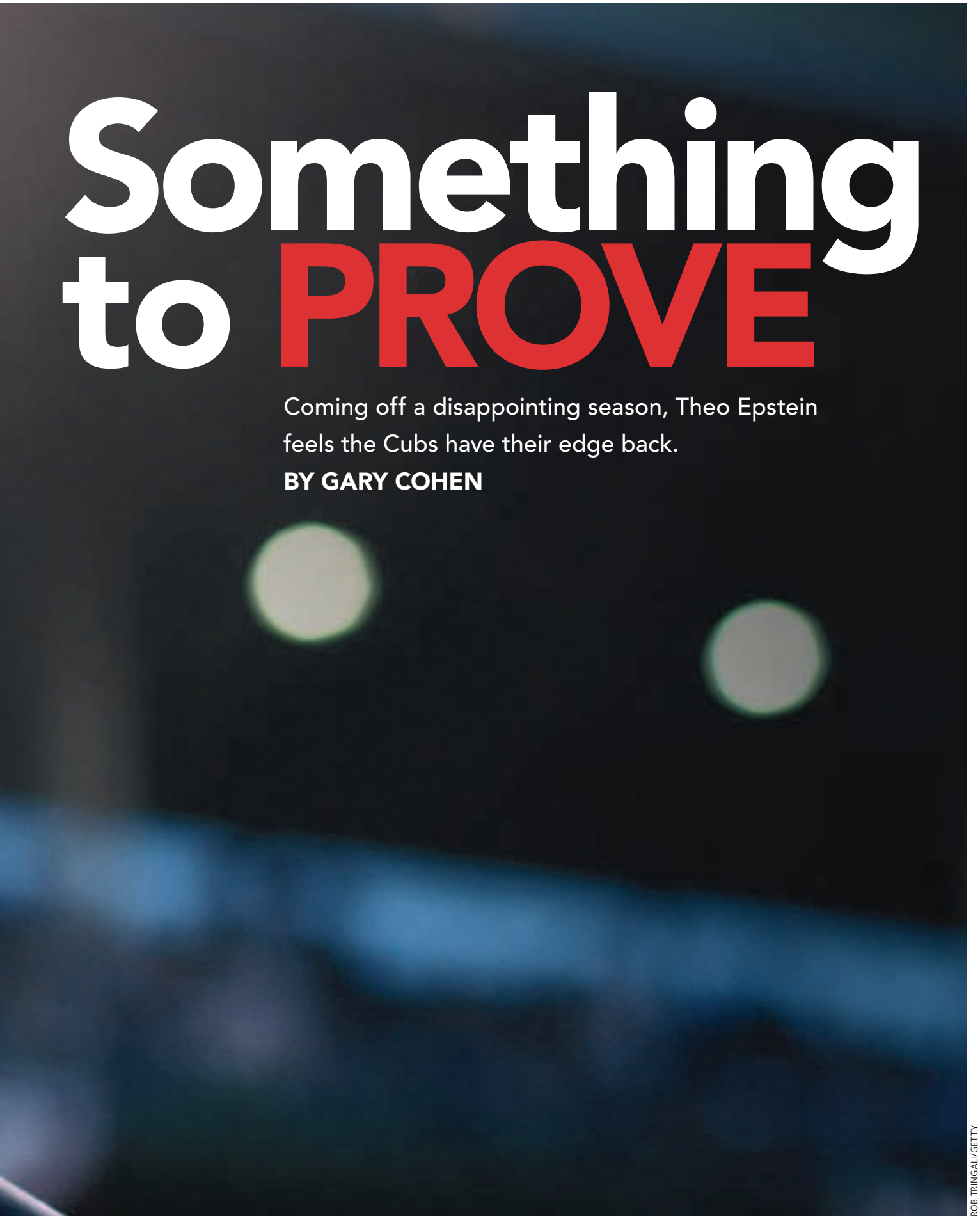
Something to PROVE

Coming off a disappointing season, Theo Epstein feels the Cubs have their edge back.

BY GARY COHEN



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Theo Epstein joined the Cubs organization in October 2011. In chronological terms, that's not all that long ago. But in baseball, eight years is enough to create a generational divide.

When Epstein came to Chicago, he rebuilt the baseball operations department from the ground up, using a mix of new-school analytics and old-school scouting. Under his direction, the Cubs became a model for other franchises, signing, drafting and developing young players who would quickly transform the organization into an annual playoff contender. He even accomplished a feat generations of supernaturally inclined fans feared would never happen when the Cubs captured the 2016 World Series title.

But the talented young core has seen diminishing returns since then. The team has been hit by injuries and underperformance, and last year missed the postseason for the first time since 2014. To right the proverbial ship — and, remember, this ship still won 92, 95 and 84 games over the last three years — Epstein and his cohorts made massive front-office and coaching changes.

"It was a lot of work this offseason, bringing in some new people, putting a lot of good people who have been here in slightly new roles," Epstein said. "In the case of the pitching and hitting department, we're using a new paradigm to structure the department, so it's been great."

Epstein knows how good the Cubs can be, but he also knows it's on the front office to put the team in the best position to succeed. The hope is that these changes will help a group still loaded with talent perform to the best of its abilities and rediscover its 2016 swagger.

Toward the end of Spring Training, we spoke with the Cubs' baseball boss about why changes were necessary, how technology is impacting development and what made David Ross the right man to succeed a legend like Joe Maddon.

Cubs Yearbook: Fans were expecting major free-agent signings or trades this winter, which didn't happen. But you made several front-office and coaching changes. Are those flying under the radar?

Theo Epstein: We built the amateur scouting and player development departments over eight years ago now. As rapidly as the industry is changing in those areas, that's a whole generation. We've been making improvements and innovating and incorporating new technologies along the way, but it's a different thing altogether to start with a blank slate and build the department from scratch and exactly the way you want to give them a new landscape in the game and for where we think the game is headed.

CY: Why do you think the timing was right for these changes, and what were you trying to accomplish?

TE: When the departments were built eight years ago, we had some of the same leadership and some of the same structures in place that were doing things a certain way. As much as you push change and try to incorporate new technologies, it's hard to break some old habits. Incorporating new technologies into an existing structure is not the same as building a data-driven process. That's what we're doing. The new structure is really player-centric and data-driven. A couple of teams have passed us in certain areas, and that's not a comfortable feeling.

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I believe that what we have in place and the incredible brain power that we have behind these ideas and the buy-in and how thoughtful it's been in its implementation with some of the new leadership that we have, we have the best practices in the industry. Now we have to prove that with the results.

> "Incorporating new technologies into an existing structure is not the same as building a data-driven process. That's what we're doing. ... A couple of teams have passed us in certain areas, and that's not a comfortable feeling."

CY: One of the keys is trying to guess what the next evolution of the game is going to be. Is biokinetics part of that?

TE: That's an important new field where, as part of player development, hitters can get real-time feedback on the way their body moves to try to shape their training to get their body to move in an optimal way to maximize their performance. It's really just making the training a lot more efficient and targeted. Strength and conditioning used to be completely separate from on-field hitting instruction, for example. But if you think about it, hitting a baseball is obviously very difficult and unique in our sport. So why would you train all hitters the same way? Certain bodies are wired tight. Certain bodies are wired loose. Every swing is different. Every set-up is different.

You should target your training to maximize your ability to hit the ball hard and hit the ball hard often. The ability to get real-time feedback on your body and on the way your body moves and on the way your swing works, and then put that into practice as you seek to improve day to day with your practice, is really important. It's been really cool now that we can break down body types, movements and swings to a really granular level.

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CY: With technology, the Cubs have been able to hit on some under-the-radar pitchers, whether it's Rowan Wick, Brad Wieck, Kyle Ryan or others. How has the pitch lab and technology impacted your ability to do that?

TE: First off, it's certainly an industry-wide trend now where instead of just a pro scout going out and evaluating a player or an analyst sitting there and looking at a results-based track record, you're now looking at exactly what a pitcher does, how he does it and forecasting potential adjustments to make him better. Our pro scouting department works really well in tandem with our R&D department in the evaluations of pitchers in other organizations and trying to understand what they do well and, more importantly, understand what they maybe could do a little bit better. That's factored into the acquisition process where you take a Rowan Wick or a Brad Wieck and just based off what they were doing and how they were performing, they probably wouldn't have been guys we would have targeted to acquire even in small deals.

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CY: Based on what: performance, the numbers, old-school stats?

TE: Yes, based on the underlying characteristics of what they did and some adjustments that we forecast would suit their bodies and their movements and the way their hand grips the ball and their arm action. With some adjustments to their arsenals, we felt like they could be even better. By definition, that makes a player potentially undervalued if you think there's some hidden value there or some things that they can do better with adjustments.

It's not always right, but it was gratifying to see the pro scouting and R&D work together to target those guys, our major league ops

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following through on the trades, and then our R&D and coaching staffs working together to unearth that potential pretty rapidly, sending those guys into the lab and then having it play out on the big league field in helping us win some games.

CY: Two years in a row, this team has been in a decent playoff position going into the stretch run before fading late. What can you do to try to ensure the team is peaking at the right time?

TE: As far as the baseball operations side of it, our job is to provide as much depth as possible so that when injuries happen, we don't suffer on the field. We weren't as deep a team this past year as we've been in previous years. That showed when we got banged up late, so there's something you can actively do to combat that. Some of it is luck. It's just staying healthy or suffering your injuries at the right time when you have a chance to do something about it, not after the trade deadline. Obviously, we suffered a lot of late injuries last year. And then some of it is these soft factors, or intangibles.

We've been open about the fact that that's an area

"We haven't been quite as hungry, quite as locked in as we were, say, in 2016, when we were clearly on a mission and unified and had that edge."

where we haven't been as sharp for the last couple of years. I don't think as an organization — and that goes for all of us at the very top down to what's going on in the clubhouse — we haven't responded as well to winning the World Series as you would like. We haven't been quite as hungry, quite as locked in as we were, say, in 2016, when we were clearly on a mission and unified and had that edge.

It's easy to eyeroll that, but how connected you feel to the mission, how locked in you are, how you feel about the people around you, when you show up to work, that matters in your job performance. With David Ross here, who is so well respected by the players and so passionate about team-building and all the little things that are

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important to building a championship team, I think we'll be a little bit more locked in here. Sometimes that can help. It's really important to play your best baseball when it matters most.

> "[David Ross] was out *Dancing with the Stars,* but we were paying him a good amount of money just to keep him close. Then he eventually came and took advantage of that."

CY: You're handing the reins of a playoff-caliber team to a first-time manager. Why is David Ross the right man for the job? And given your shared history, did you always know this day was coming?
TE: I'll start with what makes him the right guy. Of all the players I've been around, I haven't seen anyone who is more locked in on what winning looks like, all the ingredients that contribute to a winning team, and then, importantly, taking it to that next step of how to proactively build those ingredients. Taking a teammate who's starting to get isolated out to dinner or having a tough conversation with a star player to hold him accountable when he's not living up to the standards of the team. Making sure there's energy in the clubhouse and in the dugout every day. He was really proactive about that.

Then he's got this unique personality where he can call players out and hold them accountable but still be the guy everyone gravitates to. He's got an edge. He can even be a hardass at times, but he's also someone who lifts people up and is sort of the center of the connectivity universe in that clubhouse. That's a real special skillset.

I was digging through some old emails, and I found some references telling others in the front office, "This guy is definitely going to be a great manager, and we have to find a way to keep him involved." We did after he was done playing. We signed him to an unprecedented personal services contract of sorts to make sure he stayed in house — overpaid him for what he was doing. He was out *Dancing with the Stars,* but we were paying him a good amount of money just to keep him close. Then he eventually came and took advantage of that. He dove in with the R&D department and with the scouts, saw the game from 360 degrees instead of just from a player standpoint, and made himself into a fantastic manager candidate. The timing lined up where we needed something new, and he was there ready to go.

CY: The Cubs have had success bringing talented bats through the system and to the major league level. The weakness has been developing homegrown pitching. How do you feel about the state of the organization's pitching heading into the season?
TE: I'm excited about what's to come. We have some best practices now and some talent to work with, so I'm excited that there is a wave coming in. It's a scenario where we clearly have to get better. At the same time, since we started our competitive phase in 2015, we have the second-best starter ERA in the big leagues and the second-best reliever ERA in the big leagues. I care a lot less about where players come from. I care a lot more about how we perform at the big league level. Our

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pitching has actually exceeded our position player contribution.

That said, in order to sustain success and keep this thing going, it's going to be important to get some contributions. But I look at the wave we have coming through and the infrastructure we have in place to help these guys get better, and I'm pretty excited about where it's going.

CY: Certainly from a budget standpoint, it's beneficial to have those guys come up through the system.

TE: Absolutely. To keep it sustainable, you need some minimum salary contributions. We've been able to get that from outside the organization, but it would be really nice to eventually get it from inside. I personally don't believe that you have to exclusively build your organization around homegrown pitching because what that means is suffering through all the ups and downs and all the attrition of trying to incorporate young starters into your big league rotation. It's really hard to do that and contend. If you look at the teams that have won, there are very few that have built their rotations around homegrown pitching.

Yes, we want that flow of pitching coming through to keep and to trade. But, again, we've acquired most of our pitching from outside the organization and have been the second best in the big leagues. Part of that is letting pitchers sort of weed themselves out elsewhere and suffer the really difficult transition process of going from a coddled, 100-inning, minor league prospect, adjusting to big league pitching, going through your injury phase,

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"There's no doubt that coming off the pain of … failing so extremely in September that our guys have a ton of hunger and edge and feel that they have something to prove."

learning how to get up to 180-200 innings, and then you can still acquire that pitcher from outside. If we can develop the right kind of pitching and incorporate an impact starter or two, or any kind of starter, and then obviously fortify our bullpen from the inside, that's the goal.

CY: The big pitching prospect is Brailyn Marquez. What do you like about him, and does he have a chance to be the next great Cubs homegrown pitcher?

TE: I don't want to hang that burden on him, but he's got the potential to impact major league games. He's got a phenomenal arm. It's hard to find a left-hander who can touch triple digits, and he's not like a freak carnival thrower. He knows what he's doing out there. He's got a good delivery. When he's right, he's sitting in the upper 90s, and he's got an overpowering fastball. His change-up and slider really took big steps forward last year. He made some adjustments, and his stuff is playing really well. A couple of years ago, his stuff was playing below the velocity, and now it's playing at or above the velocity — how it plays through the zone, the swings hitters are getting or not getting against him.

He's starting to feel how good he can be and putting the work in. He had a really good last year in terms of the adjustments he made, how his delivery looked and then the mental side of the game. He's really been working hard and getting after it. He's still got some hurdles ahead of him. Double-A can be a big separator for guys, but we're excited about where it's going. I think he's a guy who could fill a variety of roles. As the three pitches develop, he's got a chance to be a really good starter and then probably a quicker path if he ends up going in the 'pen. But certainly we're going to work hard to make sure he's an impact starter.

CY: In recent years, you guys have always had a target on your back. This year, it feels a bit more like you're the hunter versus the hunted. Is that an advantage, and do you feel like the NL Central is still up for grabs?

TE: The NL Central is obviously up for grabs. You've got four teams that function really closely together in terms of the talent. I thought we'd be really hungry coming off 2018 because we played so poorly down the stretch — lost Game 162, lost the one-game playoff and lost the Wild Card Game. But, honestly, I think it was too easy to fall back on 95 wins. That's a lot of winning. But there's no doubt that coming off the pain of that nine-game losing streak and failing so extremely in September that our guys have a ton of hunger and edge and feel that they have something to prove. That's evident in camp, and we hope it shows up from Opening Day to the last game of the season.

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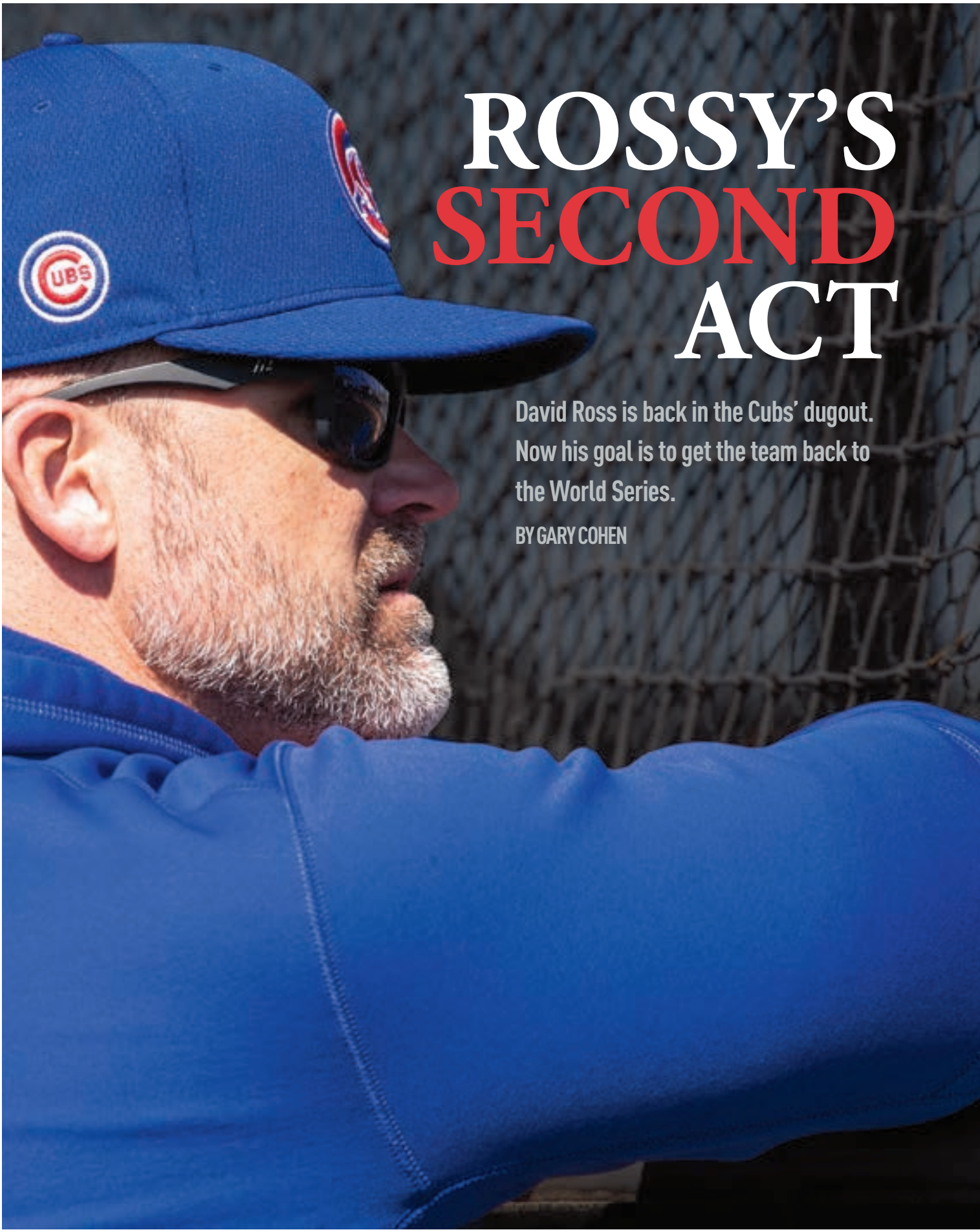


ROSSY'S SECOND ACT

David Ross is back in the Cubs' dugout. Now his goal is to get the team back to the World Series.

BY GARY COHEN

STEPHEN GREEN

It's nearly impossible to imagine a more storybook ending to a career than the one David Ross enjoyed. So much so that it's hard to reconcile the way things actually concluded with the back of his baseball card.

It's not that Ross had a lackluster career. He played 15 seasons in the big leagues with seven teams, went to the postseason seven times and won two World Series rings. He spent his final two years with the Cubs, where he enjoyed back-to-back playoff runs, including a curse-breaking, magical 2016 World Series championship. During Game 7 of the Fall Classic, he delivered a dramatic sixth-inning homer, helping the Cubs to their first title since 1908. Then, in his postgame interview with Fox's Ken Rosenthal, Ross received a heartfelt hug from manager Joe Maddon before being hefted onto the shoulders of Jason Heyward and Anthony Rizzo and literally carried off the field by his teammates.

There aren't many backup catchers who get that treatment.

But the "why" of that moment is the key. Why was he treated like a conquering hero following the World Series title? Why did Heyward pay for Ross to have a hotel suite on every road trip during his final season? Why is he a legend in Chicago after spending only two seasons here and (let's face facts) hitting only .203/.304/.351, good for a 77 OPS+ (100 being league average)?

The answer to those questions is the reason Ross is embarking on a new journey in 2020 as manager of the Chicago Cubs. Ross was always more than just Jon Lester's personal catcher. During his years on the North Side, his upbeat personality, intensity and attention to detail stood out. Baseball president Theo Epstein and general manager Jed Hoyer had worked with Ross in Boston before bringing him to Chicago, and they knew he was exactly the kind of player who could help teach a young team what winning was all about.

"Of all the players I've been around," Epstein said, "I haven't seen anyone who is more locked in on what winning looks like, all of the ingredients that contribute to a winning team, and then, importantly, taking it to that next step of how to proactively build those ingredients."

While the Cubs have had tremendous talent on the roster since that 2016 season, they have failed to repeat its success. Now, it's up to Ross to again instill that winning mentality in a 2020 Cubs squad looking to find its way back to October after missing out on the playoffs last year. This spring, we sat down with the Cubs' new skipper to talk about what he brings to the team, where the game has changed and how technology impacts his decisions.

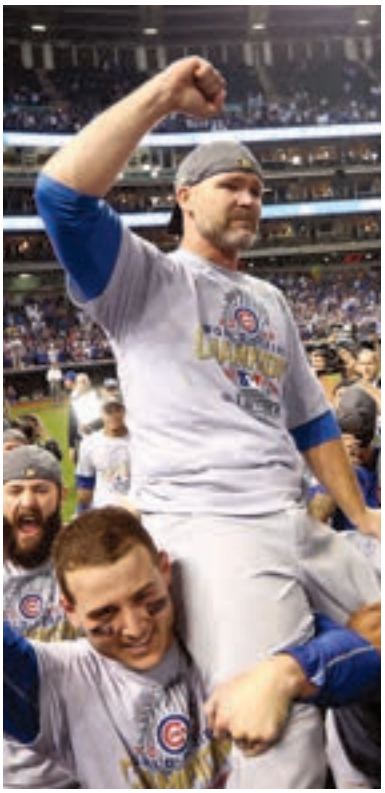
Cubs Yearbook: This is your first Spring Training as a major league manager. Is it everything you expected so far?

David Ross: Yes. I came in with open eyes and trying to just take it all in. I know the manager's job is a lot busier than you give it credit for as a player, and what they've got to deal with. There are just a lot of different departments. I would actually say it's giving me a ton of energy and just a confidence about who I am and what I believe in and what I want to see out of my players and the organization. It's powerful stuff to say what you believe over and over again and really embrace that, put that into action on the field.

CY: Everybody has talked about the intensity you bring. Do you feel like this team was lacking in that department, or do you feel like there is something you can add?

DR: I think there is something I can bring. It's just the attention to detail. Sometimes when you come to Spring Training, you are trying to think about getting your body ready and trying to take it

DAVID BANKS/GETTY



ROB TRINGALI/GETTY

slow, and you don't want to get injuries. Everybody is just like, "It's early," and we always preach that. It doesn't take a whole lot to turn that mental aspect up, and sometimes we take that for granted. If we can mentally focus and be intense, it just goes a long way in our drills and what we are thinking about, and we'll be that much sharper when things do start.

There is a fine line there between being the guy that's on everybody all the time, but when you see the details of losing and you see the details of winning, they stand out. I had just seen some winning. I'd just come from winning in Boston two years earlier. When you see it done the wrong way, you just want to make sure you point it out, because at the end of my career especially, all I cared about was winning. We all go through these stages as players, like, "I just want to make the team, and we all want to make some money." I was definitely that fifth-stage guy that Joe [Maddon] talked about. I don't care what I've got to do to win, I'm all in.

When you're brought in to be a leader and you know you need everybody in camp to win a championship, you want to start pointing out some stuff like that.

"Some of the hardest conversations I'm ever going to have are going to be in this job because I've made history with those guys. Those guys are brothers for life. Unfortunately to our relationship, I've got to tell them the truth."

CY: Once a team wins, especially a young team like you guys were in 2016, everybody just assumes they are going to keep winning forever. How hard is it to maintain that consistency at the major league level, even if you've got the talent?

DR: Yeah, no doubt. There are so many distractions too after you win. There's just off-the-field stuff. We all get stroked when we get off the field too in those moments. When you are the backup catcher on the 2016 team and you retire and you get carried off the field and the city of Chicago loves you, I felt it myself, like, "My God, I'm a career .220 hitter, and look at the way the city treats me." Then what my teammates said about me, I mean ... everything. It's all-encompassing. What these guys did for me, I can never replace or pay them back for it. That's hard to deal with at a young stage too. Now it's about, "Wow, I'm the man," and how you deal with that, what you found, how you worked, how you paid attention to certain details. Maybe you get off track a little bit.

I've always said it takes many years to realize what kind of big leaguer you're going to be and how you're going to prepare and how you're going to work. Are you an overworker? Do you need to work more? Do you need to work less? How do you treat your body? Mentally, what do you need when you go through some adversity to be tougher? All those things happen throughout a career, and I just happened to be at the back end of mine and very comfortable in my stages. These guys had success early on, on the biggest stage possible, maybe one of the biggest championships in sports history, so dealing with that is difficult.

CY: People have this idea of who you are: the fun-loving, salsa-dancing, "Grandpa Rossy" character. What would the fan base be most surprised to learn about you?

DR: I think they love the "Grandpa Rossy" stuff, but I would say I'm more of the grumpy Rossy.

I like to have fun. I shoot people straight. I do have strong feelings about what I believe and the things I've seen in my career from experiences. I've had a lot of failures also that have shaped my career and who I am. I don't have a lot of tolerance, and people think I'm this nice guy that's going to explain things. I'll shoot people straight, and I want to tell you the truth. That's the way I want to be treated. I try to be open and honest with the players about their careers, where I see them, how they stand in my eyes. That's my job now.

I've got a lot of Joe Maddon in me that wants to have a good time and relax and back off. But when something is important to me, I'm going to stand up and say it.

CY: I think it's also that ability to communicate. Joe definitely had that, and that's what everybody talks about with you.

DR: That goes back to being honest. I was a better player when I knew how the managers saw me — when I was a young guy, a middle-of-the-road guy, a guy out of options. What do you expect from me? What do you want out of me? I want you to be yourself. This is how I see you.

STEPHEN GREEN

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We all like to be lifted up in moments because the game is really hard, but I think players see through fakeness or fluff — if you're just telling me what I want to hear. I think the realness and open honesty and just shooting somebody straight goes a long way with a group of guys that just want to be the best they can be.

CY: You broke into the majors with the Dodgers in 2002. What is the biggest change in the game between then and now?

DR: So much has changed. Information, I think, is the biggest. It's really made the player be more well rounded because your flaws, somebody is going to find them out really fast. It's going to be hard to be an extended big leaguer that's going to stay around for a long time because you have to be well rounded. Whatever you don't do well, some team is going to try to exploit it. So it's created an opportunity for these players to be at their best.

CY: Does that wealth of available information make it easier for you to make the transition from player to manager?

DR: Having been a catcher and having gotten those scouting reports, I'm used to gathering information before a game, processing it and trying to figure out how to put it in play. That's what I did. I had the whole wristband thing, going over my scouting report before I catch. I'll have that same kind of information in the dugout.

> **"There is a fine line there between being the guy that's on everybody all the time, but when you see the details of losing and you see the details of winning, they stand out."**

CY: What did you do this offseason to hit the ground running, and how much did you benefit from the work you did with the Cubs' front office?

DR: A lot, a lot. Those guys are really smart. A lot smarter than I am. They've done a lot of work and gathered a lot of information. Their information is not just off experiences but about the history of the game. Finding out how they see the game, where their head's at, what historically has worked. I wasn't a big historian. I'm not a guy that watched baseball growing up. I loved to be out there playing. I was that guy. I don't follow the analytics side. Just gathering information from them, understanding, creating a relationship with them so we can have open, honest conversations throughout the year.

I wish I knew more as a player how much work went in from that side, the analytics side, so that these [players] succeed. We feel like they point out our weaknesses, but they're just trying to set you up for success. At the end of the day, we all have a job to do, and we all want to keep our jobs. You go to work every day trying to do the best you can for the Chicago Cubs, and that's putting those players in a situation to succeed.

CY: You had some great managers in your career. Do you have one that influenced you the most?

DR: Bobby Cox, for sure. I was at a weird place in my career trying to figure out who I was and what I was all about. The way he treated people; the way he managed the game; the way he was old school and believed in some of the old-school rules but yet gave you the freedom as a man to be your own person; the way his positivity spread throughout the group; his simplicity in it all; I would say that was the biggest.

I have so many. I got to play for Terry [Francona]. Joe [Maddon] was a huge one at the back end. I tell people this all the time, Bobby Cox and Joe Maddon are very similar. You feel like it's new-analytics Joe and old-school Bobby, but they really gave you a lot of the same freedoms, and Joe reiterated a lot of those beliefs I had when I came here.

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CY: Maddon will always be a legend here because of 2016 and finally delivering a World Series title to the Cubs. Any hesitation about following in his footsteps?
DR: No, because I don't look at it like that. I understand anything less than a World Series is a bust around here, and I want that for me. That's more on me. I think the worry comes from, like, I had a really good reputation in this town. I can't keep that up. There's no chance of that. As much I've loved how this city has treated me, I understand that's part of this job that I'm taking now, and you're not going to make everybody happy. Joe is a legend for what he did around here.

There's not too many of these things that end positively is the way I look at it. So I'm going to go about it, be myself, and try to win every game I possibly can and bring a championship back. At some point, it's going to be somebody else's time.

CY: How beneficial is it for you to have already built relationships in this organization, and are there any drawbacks to that?
DR: I think the relationships in general are such a positive. I can walk into Theo's office and tell him exactly how I'm feeling. That's scary because this guy has seen a lot, done a lot, had a lot of great managers, and I can get in there and have an open, honest conversation with him and Jed. I don't know that I would have the guts to do that in a new environment. I've got to feel my way, get to know somebody.

> **"I had a really good reputation in this town. I can't keep that up. There's no chance of that. As much I've loved how this city has treated me, I understand that's part of this job that I'm taking now, and you're not going to make everybody happy."**

The relationships are also very important because I can shoot the players straight. I did that as a player when I was their teammate. I can do that as a manager because I'm invested in the guys. I care about them. The drawbacks are the hard conversations. Like, I care about somebody, I don't want to give them bad news. I don't want to give them negative feedback, but I'm real with them. That's the approach I take. Some of the hardest conversations I'm ever going to have are going to be in this job because I've made history with those guys. Those guys are brothers for life. Unfortunately to our relationship, I've got to tell them the truth, and I hope that doesn't hurt our relationship. I hope they respect me for that. The fact is, that's on them. The best way I know to do that is to tell them truths. In the end, we're connected for life either way. We've made history together, and I've got to approach it like that.

STEPHEN GREEN

CY: This team was in good playoff position in each of the last two years before fading down the stretch. You can't do anything about injuries, but what can you do to make sure this team is peaking at the right time?
DR: It's about a commitment and a focus throughout the season. This team is really good. I think we all know that. There's so much written about the falter down at the end, and it has had to do with injuries. It has had to do with these guys not being 100 percent. That's part of our game.

I think depth is a real thing in our game. We've got to have guys that step up when a guy goes down, and we have to have guys to rise to the occasion and prepare for at-bats when they get their opportunity. It can't always come down to KB and Riz and Javy. Ian Happ, Albert Almora, these guys have to get the big hit. Kyle Schwarber seemed to have taken that second-half leap last year. Willson Contreras has to continue to stay healthy for us and be on the field. We're at our best version of us when we're all healthy and on the field.

CY: How beneficial is it for you to have all the new bells and whistles — the pitch lab, the high-speed cameras — that didn't exist when you started your career?
DR: Well, here's my thing with that: It's so great for the pitchers to gain information. You can reinvent things sometimes and get some feedback, especially those labs or the work that we see with the cameras and getting immediate feedback on spin rates and all these different things we can use.

My message is: Let's not rely on those things. Let's make sure we understand who we are from that information. We can tweak stuff, but when we step between those lines, it's time to compete. We have to be the best at competing. I love the information. I love the labs. I love the technology. I love all that. It's gained us a lot of talented guys that were kind of lacking in some areas. But we can't rely on that for our feedback. We have to know a good pitch without looking at a screen.

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CY: We're going to finish up with the lightning round. What's the best advice you've ever gotten?
DR: Be yourself.

CY: What talent would you like to have?
DR: I would really like to sing, believe it or not. What's that saying — the rock star always wants to be the athlete, and the athlete wants to be the rock star. I think it's the coolest thing to be a musician, to play an instrument and get up there and perform with thousands of people coming to watch you. Now, I don't know that I could do it, but I just think that's cool.

CY: What's one thing you wish you could change about yourself?
DR: I wish I had more patience with kids, being a dad. These people that just have endless patience with their kids and handling adversity, I'm so jealous of that. I'm a competitor, so I want to fix it now. I want it changed now, and I want it done now. With my kids, you want your 4-year-old to act polite when you go to the nice restaurant with the two other ones. In dad terms, when I think about just that patience, I wish I had more.

CY: How do you get away from the game and clear your head?
DR: Being a player, we're not allowed to ski. I got into skiing a little bit. You know, my phone's away. I'm up there in the mountains. I have gone two years now, and there's just a sense of peace out there on a mountain skiing.

CY: You definitely can't ski as a catcher.
DR: No, you cannot. I can't hurt my knees.

CY: What's your definition of happiness?
DR: Family.

CY: One last question: What's your definition of success?
DR: That's a tough one. For me, the definition of success is giving your all day in and day out, preparing, commitment, giving respect and trust to everybody you're around, and doing the best you can. At the end of the day, bringing yourself every day, your energy, it's a lifestyle. Success is a lifestyle. Greatness is a lifestyle for me.

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TOP-DOWN APPROACH

Fans were predicting big on-the-field changes last offseason. They got them, but it wasn't where they expected.

BY JARED WYLLYS

From left: Anthony Iapoce (hitting coach), David Ross (manager), Mike Napoli (quality assurance) and Kyle Evans (senior director, data and development)

STEPHEN GREEN

Cubs fans entered the 2019-20 offseason expecting major changes. The team was coming off a lackluster 2019 campaign, in which they won 84 games and missed the playoffs for the first time since 2014. Then, team president Theo Epstein stoked the fires at the November general managers meetings in Arizona when he said there were "no untouchables" on the roster.

"When things evolved to a place we're not as proud of, there's accountability for all of us," he said at the time. "That means a lot of change and difficult decisions and trying to move forward and create something new. Change is not always easy, but it's necessary."

While the 2020 team came into the season looking very similar to the 2019 group, plenty of change did take place last offseason. It just wasn't where people were expecting. The most noticeable alteration was at the top: After five years and one World Series title with Joe Maddon at the helm, the Cubs announced former catcher David Ross as their new skipper in November.

But he's far from the only new face at the organizational level. While there wasn't much roster turnover, many of the behind-the-scenes personnel are different from last year.

QUINN HARRIS/GETTY

At the major league level, Ross is supported by five new people, from the coaches in the dugout with him to a new senior director of data and development. This much change is at least partially the product of a disappointing 2019 season and of a free-agent budget that has shrunk from past years. With the new hires, the plan is to get the Cubs back into the postseason with largely the same roster as the team featured a season ago.

The new faces on Ross' coaching staff are Andy Green as bench coach, Craig Driver as first base and catching coach, Chris Young as bullpen coach, Mike Napoli as quality assurance coach, and Kyle Evans as senior director of data and development.

In the Clubhouse

Green comes to the Cubs after most recently serving almost four seasons as the Padres' manager, from 2016-19. Before that, the Lexington, Kentucky, native was a third base coach for the Diamondbacks in 2015, and he played for the Diamondbacks and Mets from 2006-09. The seasoned Green could prove an invaluable resource for Ross, who — despite his years in the clubhouse, behind the mic and in the front office — had never managed a big-league game heading into the season.

"[Green is] probably the biggest help for me in directing my thoughts, getting things organized, getting prepared," said Ross at the Cubs Convention. "This guy has been through the season, the National League, knows the details of what it takes to lead. He's a phenomenal human being.

"Being inexperienced, I was looking for somebody with a lot of experience. Andy Green checked a lot of boxes in the areas that I lack."

Coming off four years with a rebuilding squad in San Diego, Green relishes the chance to be part of a winner in Chicago. But his ties to the organization run deeper than that.

"I used to drive up to Wrigley from Lexington, Kentucky, when I was a kid," Green said. "I thought there would be nothing cooler [than being] a Chicago Cub. It was the late '80s, and my mom would take me up here and watch Ryne Sandberg play second base. That's what I wanted to do. There was always this pull to this uniform for me that was very, very strong."

Driver and Young both come from the Phillies organization, where Driver was the bullpen catcher for two years. Before that, the Washington state native was a coach at Yale University. Young spent the 2018 season as the Phillies' assistant pitching coach and last year

Fast Riser

Though she grew up in Los Angeles County as a diehard Dodgers fan, Rachel Folden's ties to the Cubs run deep. The 32-year-old first female coach in Cubs history shares a common memory with a lot of people who grew up in the team's television heyday.

"They were always on TV," Folden said. "WGN made it kind of cool to be a Cubs fan."

Now, that rooting interest has come full circle. Last November, the Cubs hired Folden to serve two roles: as the lead hitting lab tech and as the fourth coach on the Arizona Rookie League staff. Both jobs are based in Mesa, Arizona, which gives Folden the ability to assess hitters as they come to the hitting lab at the Cubs' spring training facility and to be at the field as the Arizona League affiliate plays its season starting in June.

"I work with a certain group of players throughout the whole year, which I'm really excited about because that's what I've been doing my whole career," Folden said.

Folden joining the Cubs organization is linked to her working with Justin Stone at Elite Baseball. The Cubs hired Stone, a biokinetics-based hitting instructor, in 2018, and he became director of hitting last October.

"We were actually driving up to University of Michigan together, and he had just gotten the job as the director of hitting," Folden said. "He said, 'I want to work with you. I'm going to recommend you for an interview.'"

But it was Folden's hitting prowess, established in a very successful college and professional career, that won her the job. By the time the Cubs called, she had been running her own business, Folden Fastpitch, for several years, but working in professional baseball was always the goal. The trailblazer represents another step forward for the Cubs in the increasingly data- and tech-driven baseball world.

"You look at a lot of peoples' track records, and you see what they've done in this game, see what we're still capable of, I would take this team any day."

—KYLE SCHWARBER

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STEPHEN GREEN

as the head pitching coach. He was a scout for the Astros and Padres before going to Philadelphia. As a player, he pitched in the minor leagues for the Rockies, Pirates and Marlins from 2002-07.

"Probably the best interview I had was Chris Young, our new bullpen coach," Ross said. "He blew me away on the phone, just in his humility and the areas where he felt like he could improve. He had been with a new, first-time manager. … He had seen some of the ups and downs, and we talked through that. [It was] very valuable."

Napoli is in his first year as a major league coach after a lengthy professional career. He played 12 seasons as a catcher and first baseman, mostly with the Angels and Rangers. He and Ross were teammates when the Red Sox won the World Series in 2013. He also played in the 2011 World Series with the Rangers and again in 2016 against the Cubs when he was with Cleveland.

STEPHEN GREEN

"Being inexperienced, I was looking for somebody with a lot of experience. Andy Green checked a lot of boxes in the areas that I lack."

— DAVID ROSS

"We can't talk about 2016 too much around him. He gets his feelings hurt," Ross joked at the Cubs Convention. "I like catching. I like pitching. It's where my heart and my head go. He's a guy who's been to three World Series. He's caught. He's played first base. When some adversity hit, he's come through. He's protected David Ortiz in the lineup. One of the best base runners I've ever been around."

Evans moved to the coaching staff after almost a decade in the Cubs organization, where he was most recently the senior director of player personnel. Baseball has become increasingly data-driven over the past decade, and Evans' new position allows him to be in uniform at times and interact with the players more directly. He will also be a key part of the decision-making team in all transactions, both in free agency and trades. Before coming to the Cubs, Evans pitched in the Indians minor-league system from 2000-05.

Changes like this are a shift from the Cubs' approach of past offseasons when they made big splashes in free agency.

"Every club, every winner has a certain landscape, certain parameters that they have to operate under," Epstein said in January. "There are going to be times where we can be really aggressive and we have a ton of flexibility and every player is a possibility for us. We knew this wasn't going to be one of those offseasons."

Regardless of the lack of change to the major league roster, the players in uniform believe there's enough talent in the mix to remain contenders and trust the direction the front office took last winter was the right one.

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"I used to drive up to Wrigley from Lexington, Kentucky, when I was a kid. ... It was the late '80s, and my mom would take me up here and watch Ryne Sandberg play second base. That's what I wanted to do. There was always this pull to this uniform for me that was very, very strong."

— ANDY GREEN

"You have to have confidence in what the front office is doing," Albert Almora Jr. said. "If they're doing the moves that they're doing or not, you have to have trust in them. They trust the players that we have, and we just have to prove them right."

Even in a third-place finish last season, the Cubs still played above-.500 baseball. And the majority of the current starters were on the team that won the World Series in 2016.

"We have to trust whoever is in the lineup, whoever is in the dugout," Javy Báez said. "This is a team that should be in the playoffs every year with the team that we have and the talent that we have."

Behind the Scenes

The Cubs also made changes at the developmental level this past offseason in an effort to improve their chances of being a postseason contender in the years to come.

Notably, they hired Casey Jacobson, a 29-year-old employee of Driveline Baseball, the pitching thinktank in the Pacific Northwest, to be their new coordinator of pitching development. The Cubs have struggled to produce homegrown pitching talent for years, so a change at this level was necessary.

Jacobson pitched for St. Mary's College in Minnesota and Augustana University in South Dakota before spending a season in the independent Pecos League. He has been an instructor at Driveline and a coach at Augustana and Macalester College in Minnesota since ending his playing career.

Kyle Boddy, the founder of Driveline, was hired by the Cincinnati Reds in October 2019, so Jacobson's hire could be seen as a Cubs analog to that move. Driveline is well known in Major League Baseball circles for having a significant impact on how modern pitchers train, prepare and ultimately perform. The Cubs, who have had to rely heavily on pitchers brought in via trade and free agency to build their staff over the last five or six seasons, added Jacobson in the hopes that

STEPHEN GREEN

Cubs manager David Ross (left) chats with new bench coach Andy Green.

STEPHEN GREEN

Quality assurance coach Mike Napoli (left) with Hernán Pérez.

STEPHEN GREEN

Willson Contreras (left) with new Cubs first base and catching coach Craig Driver.

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he can help them develop more pitching from within.

Another notable hire last winter was hitting coach Rachel Folden, who is the organization's lead hitting lab tech and a coach with the Cubs' Rookie League affiliate in Mesa, Arizona. Folden is a perfect fit in the data-driven baseball era. In 2010, she founded a biomechanics-focused instruction camp called Folden Fastpitch in Merrillville, Indiana, that works with both softball and baseball players. She graduated from Marshall University, where she was inducted into their Hall of Fame last year, and played several seasons as a professional in National Pro Fastpitch, most of them with the Chicago Bandits.

> **"There are going to be times where we can be really aggressive and we have a ton of flexibility and every player is a possibility for us. We knew this wasn't going to be one of those offseasons."**
>
> — THEO EPSTEIN

The 2020 season is one of major transition for the Cubs. The plan is that by focusing on these changes at the organizational level, they can draw the most out of the players who are already on the roster.

"I look at the talent we have on paper and I talk to our players, and I get excited about what a good team we can be," Epstein said. "There's a significant amount of upside with this group. We're not going to whistle past the graveyard. We're going to carry more risk into this year than we want to. More risk this year than we traditionally have had in the past, and it's our job to operate around that.

"We don't have the depth you would like to have and at a couple of positions. There are guys with real upside, but guys that if things don't go our way, we could have some real holes out there. That's on us and something that we're going to have to try and continue to plan for moving forward."

Of course, the Cubs are still loaded with some of the game's best talent. This is a group that has already accomplished a lot and has its eye on more postseason wins.

"What we have here is still the top tier of a lot of baseball teams," Kyle Schwarber said. "You look at a lot of peoples' track records, and you see what they've done in this game, see what we're still capable of, I would take this team any day."

That's exactly what the Cubs' front office is counting on.

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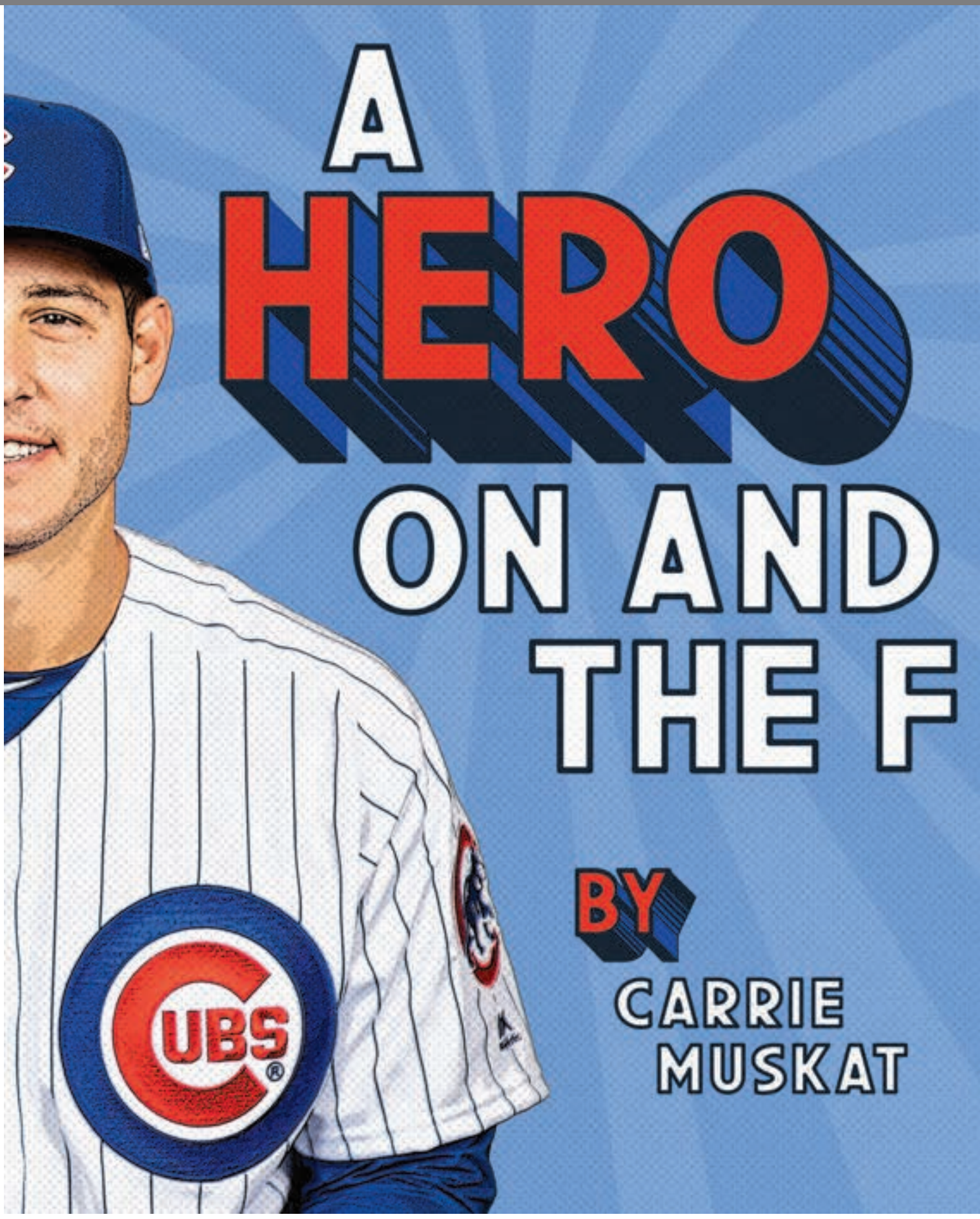
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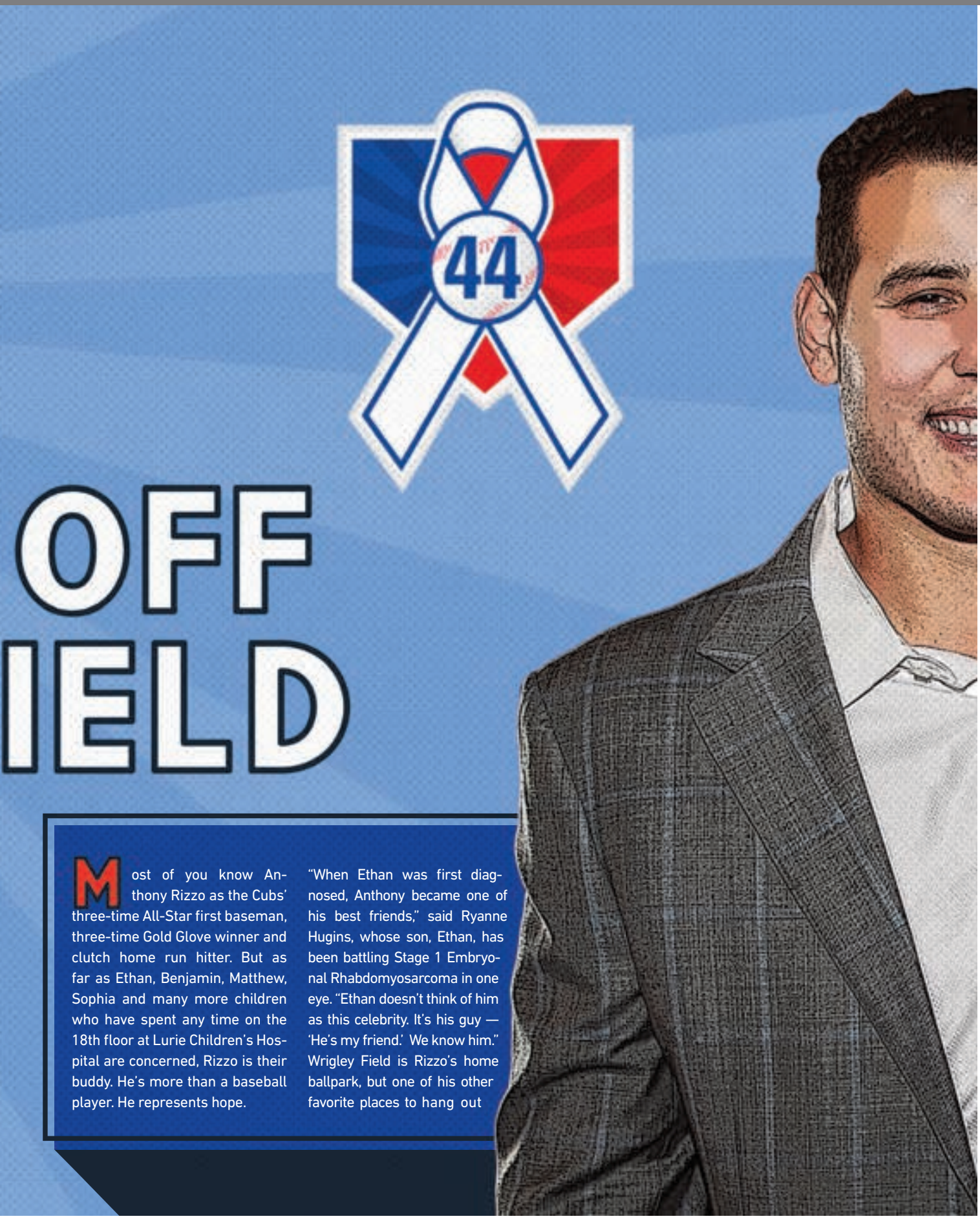

OFF IELD

Most of you know Anthony Rizzo as the Cubs' three-time All-Star first baseman, three-time Gold Glove winner and clutch home run hitter. But as far as Ethan, Benjamin, Matthew, Sophia and many more children who have spent any time on the 18th floor at Lurie Children's Hospital are concerned, Rizzo is their buddy. He's more than a baseball player. He represents hope.

"When Ethan was first diagnosed, Anthony became one of his best friends," said Ryanne Hugins, whose son, Ethan, has been battling Stage 1 Embryonal Rhabdomyosarcoma in one eye. "Ethan doesn't think of him as this celebrity. It's his guy — 'He's my friend.' We know him." Wrigley Field is Rizzo's home ballpark, but one of his other favorite places to hang out

A HERO ON AND OFF THE FIELD

in Chicago is Lurie's, where the Anthony Rizzo Family Foundation (ARFF) actively supports children and families battling cancer. In August 2017, the ARFF's $3.5 million donation created the Child Life Endowed Fund, which provides ongoing support for two oncology child life specialists. The 18th floor waiting room has been named in honor of the foundation, and it's decorated with Rizzo's No. 44 Cubs jerseys that have been autographed by the patients. When Rizzo visits the kids, he asks them to sign one of his jerseys.

The child life specialists are key. They help normalize the hospital experience for both the patients and their families. Imagine having to explain cancer to an 8-year-old — that's what Lura Boyd does.

"Our child life department is philanthropically funded," Boyd said. "However, we're funded for a three-year stay, and then we have to go back to that donor and ask, 'Do you want to continue that, or do we have to go and find another donor?' Anthony said, 'No, I like this. I needed this. I want to make sure you don't have to go back to a donor.' That's the different part that somebody found such a huge benefit in that, which is really cool."

Most companies or organizations want to donate money to sponsor something tangible, like facilities or equipment. Those contributions are welcome, but Rizzo wanted to focus on the people.

"He wanted to make a difference in the patients' lives," Boyd said. "He saw what made a difference — that it wasn't the room he was sitting in but the people coming around."

That's because Rizzo has been there. In April 2008, when he was a minor leaguer in the Red Sox organization, Rizzo was diagnosed with limited state classical Hodgkin's lymphoma. He beat cancer but saw just how much his family was affected.

"Going to the hospital really keeps you motivated," Rizzo said of his visits. "You see the looks on the kids' faces and the families'. It's a couple seconds away from the reality of what they're going through. I keep doing it because I remember when I was sick and seeing my parents suffer way more than I did. I saw the looks on their faces. I just wanted to make sure they were OK. When I see the kids [at the hospital], I tell them all the time to be strong for their families."

The Hugins family has experienced firsthand just how impactful the child life specialists can be as they've dealt with Ethan's battles.

"It moved very fast," Hugins said. "Ethan was diagnosed on a Thursday and got his port on Friday and chemo by Saturday. [Child life specialist Sara Stewart] made sure she was there every step, and even when we relapsed, it was the same thing. She was a big part of it."

ANTHONY IS SO GENEROUS OF HIS TIME, AND HE HAS SO MUCH PRIDE IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.

—Michael Udine, Former Parkland (Fla.) Mayor

"They're so instrumental, and not just for the kids but the parents," she said. "I would tell [Stewart], 'Ethan's not eating, he's not talking, he doesn't want to do anything with anybody.' And she would go to her bag of tricks and come back with something that would pull him out of his shell and change the experience.

"For Ethan, both times he was diagnosed, he was in the hospital in the summer, so it was a lot of missing out on a lot of different things," Hugins said. "She was aware of that. If anything was going on, and even if it was times when we were not in the hospital, but if there were events we could go to during the week before chemo and participate in before chemo, she made sure we were aware of it and thought of us and contacted us and made sure we were still keeping busy."

Hugins said she didn't know child life specialists existed before coming to Lurie's.

"It's a service that should be such a priority," she said. "I think any hospital that doesn't have it is doing a disservice to their kids."

The ARFF, which Rizzo and his family created in 2012, does much more. The Hugins family can attest to that personally. After 22 weeks of chemo and 28 rounds of proton radiation, Ethan was declared to be in remission in January 2016. But in March of that same year, scans revealed the tumor was growing again. He needed to begin a rigorous 33-week chemo protocol. When the Hugins family wanted to get a second opinion in New York, the ARFF took care of their expenses.

"At the time, I was trying to figure out lodging and how we were going to pay for all

A HERO ON AND OFF THE FIELD

Rizzo's foundation holds an annual 5K walk in his hometown of Parkland, Florida.

this stuff, and Abby [Suarez, ARFF executive director] reached out to me and said, 'Whatever you need, we have it. We're here for you,'" Ryanne Hugins said. "That was a huge help for us."

The foundation's first event was a Walk-Off for Cancer in Rizzo's hometown of Parkland, Florida. It was organized by his mother, Laurie, one of her friends and Rizzo's agent, Marc Pollack, in December 2012. They hoped to raise $30,000 from the 5K walk. They garnered more than $100,000. And friends, neighbors and others haven't stopped contributing. Donations from last year's walk totaled more than $1 million.

"It was an exciting event. Everybody wanted to be there the first year, and each year it's gotten bigger and bigger," said Michael Udine, former Parkland mayor who is now a Broward County (Fla.) commissioner. "Anthony is so generous of his time, and he has so much pride in the local community that, year after year, he gets such positive turnout and feedback. Everybody wants a piece of Anthony that day. I don't know how he does it, but he always manages to give some of himself on that day. Nobody walks away disappointed."

Now, the ARFF hosts not only a Walk-Off in Parkland, but also a Cook-Off during the Cubs' season and a Laugh-Off during the Cubs Convention in Chicago.

"After [2019], we'll have raised more than $10 million," Laurie Rizzo said.

Benjamin Burke is another child who has benefited from the ARFF's efforts. He was diagnosed with T-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia days after his seventh birthday and underwent nine months of intense intravenous chemotherapy and weekly clinic visits to monitor his cell counts. Benjamin met Rizzo during one of the first baseman's hospital visits at Lurie's, and they connected immediately.

When patients complete their treatment, they ring a bell to celebrate. In April, Rizzo was there when Benjamin did so on the 18th floor at Lurie's to signal the end of his three-and-a-half-year cancer treatment.

Rizzo's successful battle against cancer helps Boyd when she talks to patients and their families. Yes, cancer is terrifying, but here's someone who beat it, and look at him now.

"It can start the conversation sometimes and gets your foot in the door to say, 'Yeah, I do know Anthony Rizzo. Let's talk about it. He had cancer. Look where he is now. Let's talk about your cancer. What are your hopes and dreams and goals for the future?'" Boyd said.

"It's fun talking about somebody who went through things so similar to what they're going through and to be able to say, 'Look at this parallel, where they are now and where you could be in your future,'" Boyd said. "He's healthy, he's the first baseman of the Cubs, he's doing things. It's inspiring."

Rizzo also has provided inspiration to his hometown, which was shocked in February 2018 when 17 people were killed in a shooting at his alma mater, Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. There was a candlelight vigil at the same park where Rizzo holds his charity walk, and he flew from Arizona to speak to the crowd.

"It shows you what he means to the city and what the city means to him," Udine said. "He was right there. He was emotional. I think the city was very emotional as it received Anthony."

"He's really somebody here who everybody feels like they know and they feel they're a part of," Udine said. "Whether they're a Cubs fan or not, I think they're all Anthony Rizzo fans."

Oakland Athletics pitcher Jesus Luzardo definitely is. He also went to Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and took part in Rizzo's walks.

"He's kind of like an idol back home," Luzardo said. "You say 'Rizzo' and everyone knows

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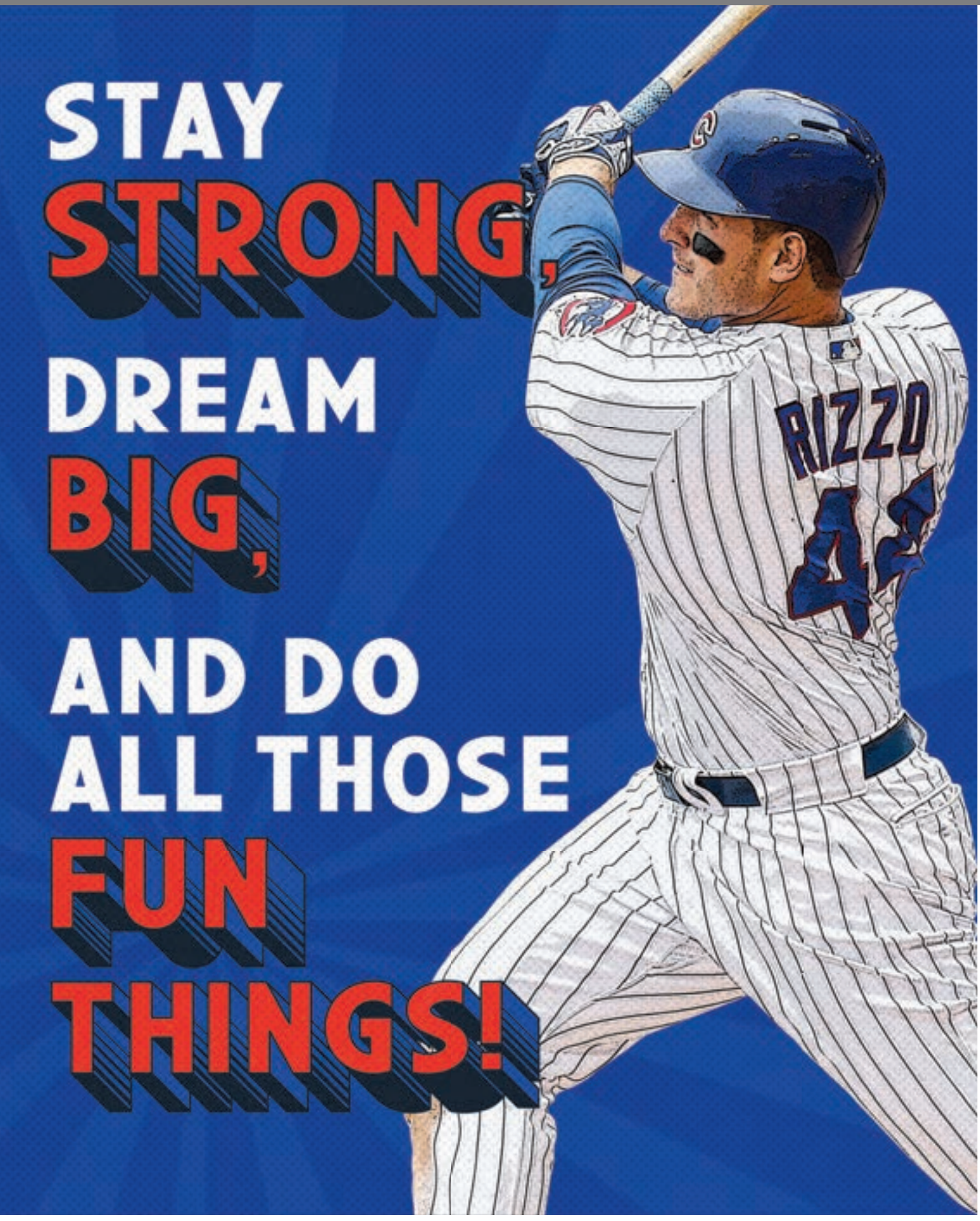
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who he is. He means a lot to Parkland. He was there [after the shooting], and it meant a lot to the community."

During the season, Rizzo tries to get to Lurie's at least once a month. There's no fanfare and usually no cameras. It's just Rizzo, some of his family members and ARFF staff.

"He doesn't do it for the accolades," Hugins said. "It's because he genuinely wants to be there. And he comes on gamedays, which to me is insane."

Said Boyd: "He wants to be the one who talks with the kids and gives them smiles and tells them, 'Stay strong, dream big,' and do all those fun things."

"He's really committed to it," Laurie Rizzo said. "He loves going on the visits. Nobody tells him to go. He'll call Abby and say, 'Set it up for next week. I want to go see the kids.'"

Rizzo's devotion to helping children and their families was recognized in 2017 when he was named the recipient of the Roberto Clemente Award, presented to the major league player who best represents the game of baseball through extraordinary character, community involvement, philanthropy and positive contributions, both on and off the field.

"To win this is amazing," Rizzo said when honored. "That's the impact we want to make. A lot of organizations do amazing work, and we want to impact families directly. And this foundation, that's what the staple is. It's insane over the last few years how many people have come up to me and said how we've helped someone's friend of a friend of a friend, and it gets back to me. To touch lives like that, it's something you can't explain."

While Ethan was undergoing treatment for two straight summers, he watched a lot of Cubs games.

"Now he plays baseball, and you can tell he loves the game because he's watched so much of it," Ryanne Hugins said. "All his coaches say he has the fundamentals down because he studied the games. That's all he could do was watch baseball. He goes out there and swings his hips like Anthony or squats real low like Kris [Bryant]. Everything he does kind of mimics what he sees in his favorites."

And Anthony Rizzo is definitely a favorite.

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GAME Face

How Jon Lester helped build a winning culture at Wrigley Field.

BY JARED WYLLYS

STEPHEN GREEN

When Jon Lester made his first start for the Cubs in April 2015, renovations to Wrigley Field were still ongoing. As part of the bleacher rebuild and expansion, the seats above the ivy-covered walls were closed to fans. During that time, a large tarp featuring pictures of Ernie Banks covered the space where the new seats would eventually be.

Lester was the exciting, big-ticket addition, signed the previous December to help usher in a new era of Cubs baseball. His team was a hodgepodge of young players with fantastic upside, but the kids were also coming off an 89-loss season in 2014. The group's promise was alluring, but the proverbial tarp was still on, and there was work to be done.

That was the beginning of Lester's six-year, $155 million contract; the 2020 season marks the potential end. The Cubs have a team option on Lester for 2021, but whatever happens, during the time Lester has been in Chicago, the Cubs have already ended a 108-year-old curse and made postseason appearances in four-straight seasons, from 2015-18. That's rarified air for any team, and it was unprecedented for the Cubs.

In the process, the now-36-year-old hurler has helped change the culture of the organization, a change he believes will be long lasting. His fingerprints are all over this team — in both measurable and intangible ways. The numbers are there, and so is his impact on the overall environment.

"I came here to win a World Series, and we did that. So your expectations change from, OK, we got that one to now we need to do it again," Lester said. "I think my expectations have been matched, and any time you can match those and then add new expectations, it's always a good thing."

A part of that cultural shift meant the standard "just one before I die" refrain became something entirely different. In *Lady Windermere's Fan*, Oscar Wilde wrote that two of the greatest tragedies in life are not getting what you want and getting everything you want. He said the latter was worse. Like fans in Boston after the Red Sox ended their World Series drought in 2004, the Cubs faithful didn't settle into a sleepy state of post-championship contentment. Expectations changed.

Lester helped make that happen, and he continues to set new standards for Cubs baseball.

"I think my expectations have been matched, and any time you can match those and then add new expectations, it's always a good thing."

— JON LESTER

SETTING THE STANDARD

When Lester made a rare relief appearance in Game 7 of the 2016 World Series, he inherited the unfinished work of starter Kyle Hendricks. With two outs in the fifth inning and one runner on base, manager Joe Maddon decided it was time to turn to his ace, despite previously stated plans to bring Lester in only at the start of a clean inning.

The big lefty immediately gave up a single and a wild pitch that allowed two runs to score, trimming the Cubs' lead to 5-3. But after that, he was unflappable, holding the Cleveland Indians to just three other baserunners before handing the ball over to Aroldis Chapman in the eighth inning. From there, a game-tying home run, a rain delay, a curse broken, a culture changed.

"The standard is set that it's World Series or bust," Hendricks said. "It really started with [Lester] and that mindset that he brought over when we first signed him."

In the process of luring Lester to Chicago, team president Theo Epstein and general manager Jed Hoyer told

JONATHAN DANIEL/GETTY

JEZRA SHAW/GETTY

"When you think of Jon Lester, you immediately think world champion. You get battle-tested, game face, consistency. … He wants the ball in the biggest moments, and, to me, there's a lot to be said about that."

— JASON HEYWARD

him they thought he was one of the missing pieces who could help them transition to a winning culture on the North Side. Through shrewd drafts, trades and free-agent signings, they already had a cadre of talented up-and-comers in hand, but they needed a veteran. They needed a winner. They needed someone to show the young bucks the way.

"Those conversations were what made me believe in coming here," Lester said. "Just being in Chicago, obviously, I like the city and stuff, but any time you add Wrigley Field with a 108-year curse and expectations and stud prospects coming up, it makes your decision a little bit easier."

A big part of the pitch to Lester in the early winter of 2014 was the possibility that Jason Heyward — at the time, being traded from his hometown Atlanta Braves to the St. Louis Cardinals — could be playing in the Cubs' outfield in 2016 when he reached free agency. Heyward, having now spent the last four seasons playing alongside Lester, has come to appreciate the pitcher's impact.

"When you think of Jon Lester, you immediately think world champion," Heyward said. "You get battle-tested, game face, consistency. … He wants the ball in the biggest moments, and, to me, there's a lot to be said about that."

Lester has been the steady presence at the front end of the rotation since his 2015 debut with the club. Coming into 2020, he had made four Opening Day starts, in 2015, 2017, 2018 and last year. He pitched more than 200 innings in his first two seasons in Chicago, and he has made at least 30 starts every season in a Cubs uniform. He's also a two-time All Star with the Cubs (2016, 2018) and finished second in NL Cy Young voting in 2016.

Those kinds of numbers don't happen by accident. "[He's] a proven winner, a World Series winner, all these things," Hendricks said. "To see the work he puts in still after having 10-plus years, he comes in the weight room, and what he does, it shows guys. It showed young guys that this is what it takes to reach the top."

SIGN OF THE TIMES

Since 2015, Jon Lester has been a model of consistency for the Cubs. He's also a creature of habit on the mound. But that doesn't mean he can't adapt to a changing game — and changing stuff.

"I've become more confident in things that I wasn't confident in at a younger age. I have to use everything now. I have to be able to command both sides of the plate, and up and down in areas that normally weren't my strengths. You have to. You get older. I don't have those fast-twitch muscles that I once had. You've got to constantly change and keep the hitters guessing."

According to FanGraphs, Lester has used his fastball 52 percent of the time during his career and thrown it at an average of 92.1 mph. In 2019, his fastball usage was down to 38.4 percent, and the pitch clocked in at 90.3 mph. To offset that, he used his cutter and change-up much more. His cutter usage rose from a career average of 24.4 percent to 34.5 percent, while his change-up went from 8 percent to 11.7 percent.

JOHN DURR/GETTY

SHOWING THE WAY

Lester's doggedness and consistency is reflected in the young core that has played around him since 2015. Hendricks, who made his rookie debut the season before Lester arrived, said watching and learning from Lester has helped him develop increased self-confidence and an ability to block distractions and outside noise. Being a professional athlete in Chicago comes with a great deal of pressure, and nowhere is that more evident than at Wrigley Field, both before and after the World Series.

Having played in Boston through two title runs and pitched in the American League Wild Card Game with Oakland the fall before signing with the Cubs, Lester came to Chicago already inured to that kind of pressure.

"I try to really take a lot of that from him," Hendricks said. "It's tough to get that feeling, but the more conversations you have with him, you feel that intensity and that will to win. It bleeds over to everybody."

Willson Contreras came up as a rookie the year the Cubs won the World Series. Through the years since, he too has felt Lester's influence.

"Every time [a] new pitcher comes to the clubhouse, I think the first thing they do is follow Jon Lester, follow his routine," Contreras said. "That's somebody that every pitcher should look up to. ... His presence on the team is always great for us."

That means watching how he works out, how he prepares and how hard he pushes himself. Lester's work ethic and demeanor carry over to the other pitchers and position players even if he isn't always vocal about it.

"I've always been a big believer in leading by example, not necessarily by voice," Lester said. "I'm not a very talkative person when it comes to stuff like that."

While his advice to teammates may not be loud, it still resonates.

"The little conversations he has with everyone, he'll pass on little nuggets of information from experiences he's been through," Hendricks said. "You can learn so much from this guy. If he wouldn't have been around, there wouldn't have been the same direction or focus, not even close to what there has been. That was really the start of all the good things that have happened."

Lester is the kind of guy his teammates want to play behind. Seeing the way he grinds makes them do it too because they don't want to let him down. If Lester is going to be that locked in on every pitch, the least they can do is show the same focus.

"It's also a calming presence," Heyward said. "It's one that you want to be behind this guy, you want to be ready, you want to be present. You want to be ready from the first pitch to the last pitch of that game to go out there and get that win for him."

QUINN HARRIS/GETTY

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

In a lot of ways, the 2020 Cubs entered the season in a similar spot as the 2015 team. Many of the right pieces are in place, but the unfinished business of winning another World Series is also there. The team isn't at the end of a full rebuild like it was six seasons ago, but the Cubs do have a new manager and bench staff and myriad changes at the organizational level. Plus, last season was the first time since 2014 the

FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES

One big difference in the 2020 Cubs is the man at the helm. After a stellar five-year run, Joe Maddon was replaced by former Cubs catcher and two-time World Series champion David Ross. This could easily have presented a challenge for Jon Lester, as the two are longtime friends and former teammates.

Ross spent years as Lester's personal catcher and had still caught more of Lester's innings (578.2) than any other backstop entering this season. But Lester said he had no problem accepting his old friend as his new boss. In fact, he thought Ross was the perfect man for the job.

"He's the polar opposite of Joe," Lester said. "It's just a completely different voice. Joe's laid back and lets the players do their thing. Ross, he's more high-energy and wants to be a part of what the players are doing. That's not saying that Joe wasn't a part of what we were doing. That's just two different styles, and I think they're both going to be very successful."

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STEPHEN GREEN

Cubs didn't reach the playoffs.

Lester knows what it's like to have to wait several years between championships, a period that can feel like an eternity to both players and fans. His Red Sox teams took home the trophy in 2007 and 2013. Winning is hard in baseball — so much has to go right over 162 games — and doing so consistently is a rare accomplishment. The success the Cubs have had during Lester's tenure is uncommon. Still, he is optimistic about what lies ahead.

"I think we are in a good place," Lester said. "I like where everybody's at. I like our new additions on the coaching staff. I love our additions for our bullpen."

Whether 2020 is Lester's final season in a Cubs uniform or not, his legacy as one of the best free-agent signings in Chicago sports history is cemented. He ushered in the golden era of Cubs baseball, finishing the business of a rebuilding team looking to finally end the longest championship drought in American professional sports history. On the way,

"If he wouldn't have been around, there wouldn't have been the same direction or focus, not even close to what there has been. That was really the start of all the good things that have happened."

— KYLE HENDRICKS

Lester helped change the culture of Cubs baseball so that winning one World Series didn't mean settling comfortably back into being baseball's lovable losers again.

"I don't think the worth of what he's done, especially from Day One that he's showed up, has really been quantified," Hendricks said. "I don't know if you can. The team was so young at that point. We didn't know what direction to go. We didn't know what winning really looked like.

"To set that level, set that bar for everybody, it really can't be qualified. ... If he wouldn't have been around, there wouldn't have been the same direction or focus, not even close to what there has been. That was really the start of all the good things that have happened. He is the guy that started it all."

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ASON YWARD

BY CARRIE MUSKAT

Jason Heyward does not talk much, but when he does, his teammates listen.

The Cubs outfielder has been speaking up more in recent years, but it has nothing to do with his famous rain delay speech during Game 7 of the 2016 World Series. It's just the right time.

"I would say he's being himself," teammate Kyle Schwarber said of Heyward. "He's trying to bounce some things off guys and be able to go out there and get the best out of himself and other people. That's what makes him a great leader too."

How did Heyward find his voice? First, you need to know how he became one of the top defensive outfielders in baseball. Watch how Heyward backs up Albert Almora Jr. or Schwarber or whoever is in the outfield with him on routine plays. Not every outfielder does that. But Heyward learned the skill at a young age.

"We went through walk-throughs and drew up plays on a dry erase board," Heyward said of his baseball instruction at the age of 7. "It was, 'Hey, when this happens, these guys need to be backing up here, these guys need to be backing up there.' In the outfield, you learn right away the center fielder has priority, but he has to back up the ball. And in right field, you have to back up the ball in center and back up

JASON HEYWARD

the bases. When the ball is hit, you want anyone in the outfield to feel they can go after the ball aggressively and dive for it and not worry, 'Is it going to get by me?'"

The awareness necessary to be in the right place at the right time was ingrained in Heyward at a very young age.

"You think it out ahead of time before the play happens," he said. "That was a big thing to learn early. We had to hold up the number of where we're going to throw the ball before a situation. It's nice to be right there, front and center, and see these plays happen. It slows the game down, just to be there and back them up. The next thing you know, if they're not there, that's a run or an extra base."

Cubs third base coach Will Venable certainly appreciates Heyward's efforts in the grass.

"He's such a pro," Venable said of Heyward. "He works at it, he's thoughtful about situations, he's thoughtful about hitters. Every input that there is that an outfielder needs to put into a play before the play, he's doing it properly. Combine that with his physical ability and athleticism, he's turned himself into the best right fielder I've seen."

Heyward is so self-aware, Venable relies on his expertise when game-planning the various ballparks. How deep should the Cubs' outfielders play? What do the crazy configurations in some stadiums, such as Oracle Park in San Francisco, mean?

"He's played them all and he's played a ton of games [at Wrigley], so he knows how aggressive he has to be against the ivy," Venable said.

"He's just very efficient," Schwarber said of Heyward. "His routes are just always right. There's never a false step, there's never a bad step. Just the way he gets the balls, the way he is able to keep the ball in front, he knows when he can take a risk, and he knows when he can't take a risk."

"I know he's running through things in his mind before the play even happens," Schwarber added. "That's what makes him so good. I call him 'The Machine.' He's a defensive machine out there. It's kind of freakish when you see him make some of the diving plays. I feel like people take some of them for granted. He makes it look really easy, and I'm like, 'That play was not easy at all.'"

Sometimes, Heyward doesn't even have to say a thing. Kris Bryant, who is often shifted from third base to the outfield, has watched how Heyward handles balls in the sun and positions himself. There's a reason Heyward has won five Gold Gloves.

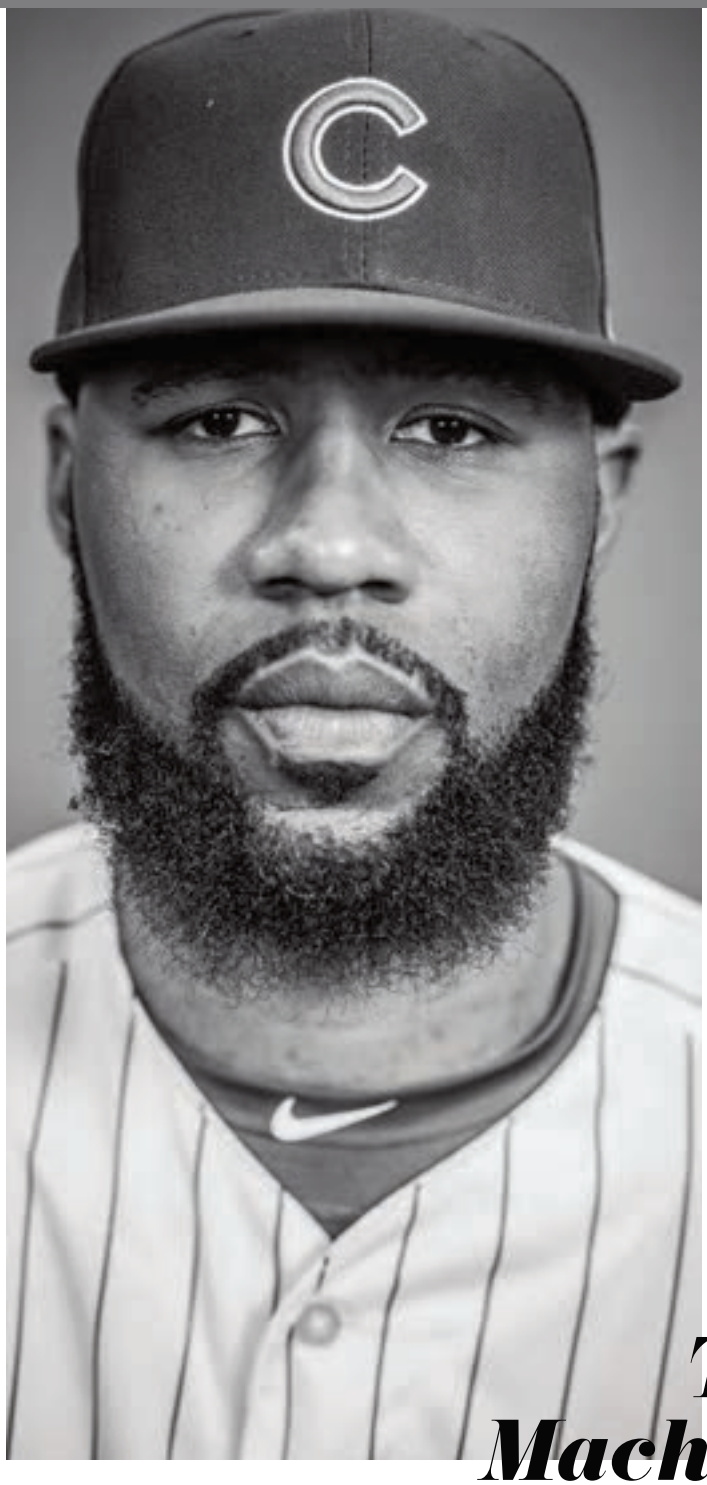
"Fundamentally, he is as correct as any player I've had," said former Cubs manager Joe Maddon. "He came up through Atlanta, a very conservative organization, and has been taught properly. And then he goes to St. Louis, and then he comes [to Chicago]. Those teams are sticklers on detail, and he got the detail."

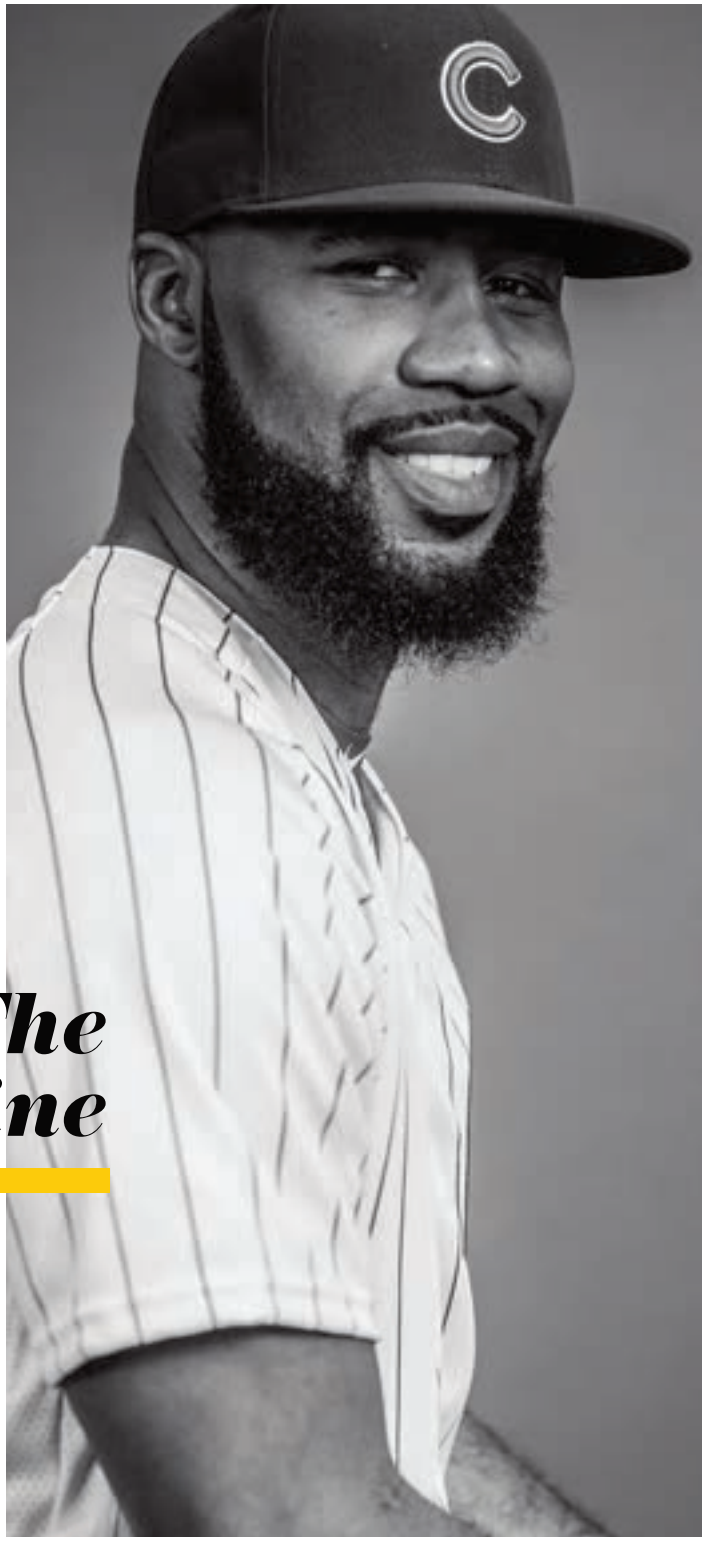
If one of the Cubs' outfielders doesn't make a play, Heyward is right there to offer encouragement and to remind them to be ready for the next ball.

"If there's a physical error, he's the first one picking you up," Almora said. "I messed up in Pittsburgh [last year], and the first person I looked at was Jason, and he's clapping and saying, 'Let's go, get the next one.' He always gives positive reinforcement."

Heyward's homework involves more than studying the scouting

The awareness necessary to be in the right place at the right time was ingrained in Heyward.





The Machine

"I know he's running through things in his mind before the play even happens. That's what makes him so good. I call him 'The Machine.' He's a defensive machine out there."

— Kyle Schwarber

JASON HEYWARD

RIGHT: *Jason Heyward homers in his major league debut, April 5, 2010, vs. the Cubs.*

reports. Cubs manager and former catcher David Ross said Heyward would ask about the pitcher's game plan to help with his positioning in right field. That's also something Heyward learned early in his baseball career.

"He'll say, 'If Jon [Lester] is going in on two strikes, I'm going to creep in a couple steps in right because I don't think [the batter] can hit it over my head,'" Ross said. "Or, 'I saw you guys going back to offspeed so I played in the gap.'

"He's so locked in on every pitch. He's locked in on the pitch calling, he's locked in on the game plan, swings of the hitter. He's probably one of the most knowledgeable outfielders I've been around."

Ross has seen Heyward grow up. The two were teammates in 2010 on the Braves, during Heyward's first year in the big leagues. Atlanta's first-round pick in 2007, Heyward has had to deal with sky-high expectations (including comparisons to Hank Aaron) since he was a standout at Henry County High School in nearby McDonough, Georgia. Cubs fans most likely remember Heyward's debut. On April 5, 2010, in his first at-bat, Heyward hit a three-run home run in the first inning off the Cubs' Carlos Zambrano. He added an RBI single in the Braves' 16-5 win at Turner Field.

"For Cubs fans, I'm sure it wasn't that great," Ross said. "But for a Braves fan and a veteran guy who saw this kid take on a ton of expectations and then have that success in his first at-bat, it was really special and still one of my favorite Opening Day moments for sure."

Heyward learned from what he called a "Hall of Fame" group in Atlanta, including Ross, Chipper Jones, Billy Wagner, Troy Glaus, Tim Hudson, Eric Hinske,

"HE'S SUCH A PRO.

He works at it, he's thoughtful about situations, he's thoughtful about hitters. Every input that there is that an outfielder needs to put into a play before the play, he's doing it properly. Combine that with his physical ability and athleticism, he's turned himself into the

BEST RIGHT FIELDER I'VE SEEN."

CUBS THIRD BASE COACH, WILL VENABLE

JASON HEYWARD

Brian McCann, Martín Prado and Michael Bourn.

"They gave me the key," Heyward said of the Braves' players. "They gave me the blueprint to what's going on in this game and how to do it for a long time. Showing up, playing every day, trying to get better, push through different things — it was getting schooled at a young age, getting groomed. I'm super appreciative. It's not like that everywhere and definitely now because the game is that much younger. I owe them a lot. I try to let them know that."

Those players all helped groom Heyward to be the leader he is today.

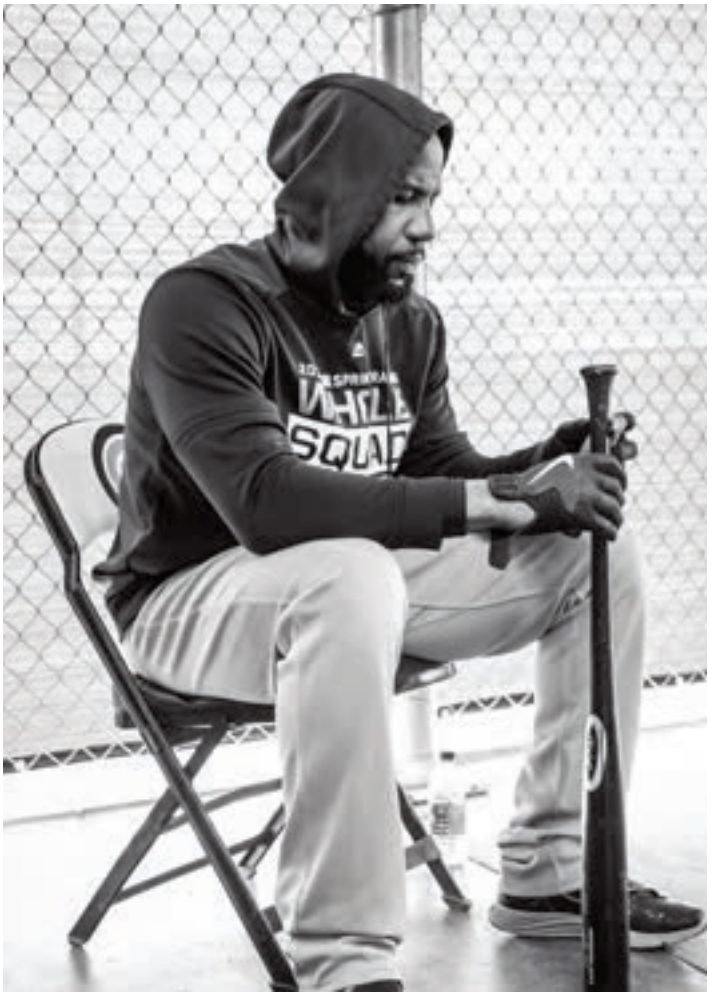
"If I had a different group, it could have been that much worse for me having all the attention," he said of his early days with the Braves. "But because I handled it how I handled it, I earned some respect from them. That respect went a long way for me. It could've been way more distracting. I didn't let it, and they didn't let me."

Heyward is now using that experience to benefit the Cubs. It would have been easy for him to keep quiet. After the franchise gave him a huge, eight-year contract in December 2015, he got off to a slow start at the plate in his first two seasons on the North Side.

"When he had his struggles, he didn't let that affect him being a good teammate," Anthony Rizzo said. "What's most important and what has the most value as a person is when you're not living up to what you think you should be living up to offensively, it's hard not to take that into the clubhouse or take that home. He's done a really good job of being himself, and when you see someone like that who works so hard to have success, you're very happy for him."

"This game has a way of repaying you, and you get what you put into it for the most part," Rizzo said. "To see him doing what he's doing now is really fun to watch."

Heyward had a bounceback season in 2019, and he hopes to carry that momentum into 2020 and beyond. His 14 homers prior to the 2019 All-Star break were his most since hitting 14 first-half homers with Atlanta in 2012. Heyward also had some epic at-bats last year, including on July 17 against the Reds' David Hernández at Wrigley Field when he fouled off five consecutive pitches before hitting a two-run double to right to open a 4-0 lead.



"He came in with a plan of his own, and it was basically to get better," Cubs hitting coach Anthony Iapoce said of Heyward's approach at the start of last season. "He just wants to improve his game to help the team win. It wasn't some stance or drill or anything like that. People might think they see him do things differently, but it's really not that much."

Iapoce points to the Cubs' April 2019 series against the Brewers as being key. Heyward hit a two-run homer with two outs in the eighth inning against Matt Albers on April 5 and was 3-for-3 with two home runs the following day.

"He knocked three out of the park and really started attacking the ball better and started gaining more confidence to be aggressive out in front with the ball," Iapoce said. "Other than that, there hasn't been a lot of changes."

Except for his voice.

"In the outfield in the last few years, I've tried to speak up more on what I see," Heyward said. "It goes a long way. Someone can say something to me too. It's good to have. You're going to need that. You're going to wish you had that conversation."

"Defensively, the players follow his lead," Maddon said of Heyward. "He's got a good way about him because he plays it right. He's a really sound baseball player, and he doesn't like putting up with baseball nonsense. He has his fun like anybody else, but out there, he, as much as anybody I've had, wants it done properly, and he'll tell them."

How different is Heyward today compared with how he was during his first Chicago season in 2016?

"There's a big difference," Heyward said. "The group is different. It's a different team. Every year is different. People don't realize that. For me, I speak up more on certain things, but it's only out of love and out of knowing the guys, knowing the group, and trying to get the best out of everyone but also letting them know, 'I need you to help me get the best out of me.' We challenge each other in that way, but we enjoy it. It's a lot of fun."

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DAVID ROSS

MANAGER 3

STEPHEN GREEN

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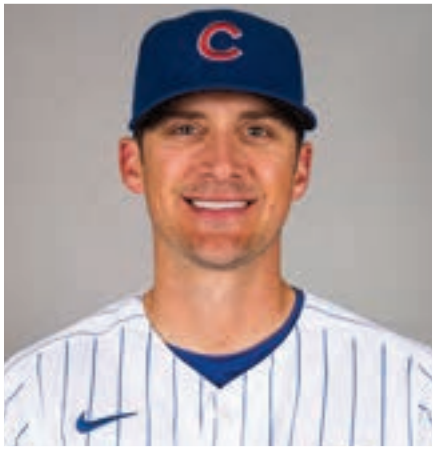
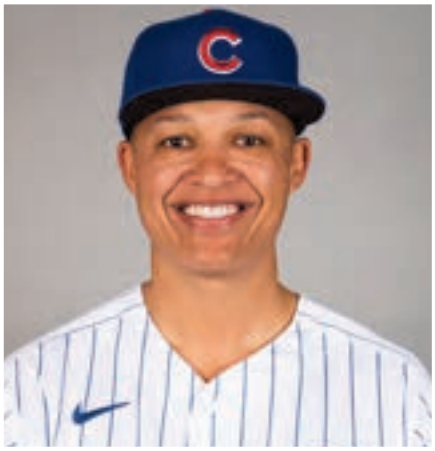


TOMMY HOTTOVY

PITCHING COACH 68

ANTHONY IAPOCE

HITTING COACH 99



WILL VENABLE

THIRD BASE COACH 25

CRAIG DRIVER

FIRST BASE/CATCHING COACH 81

MIKE BORZELLO

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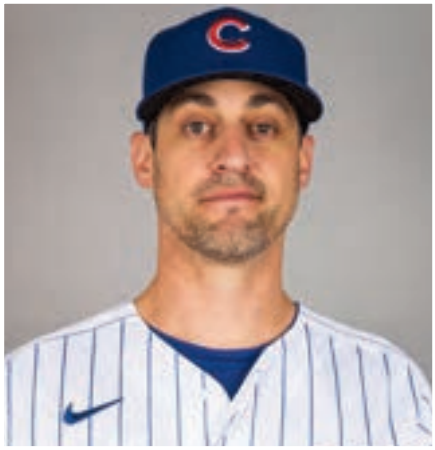

KYLE EVANS

SENIOR DIRECTOR, MAJOR LEAGUE DATA AND DEVELOPMENT 91

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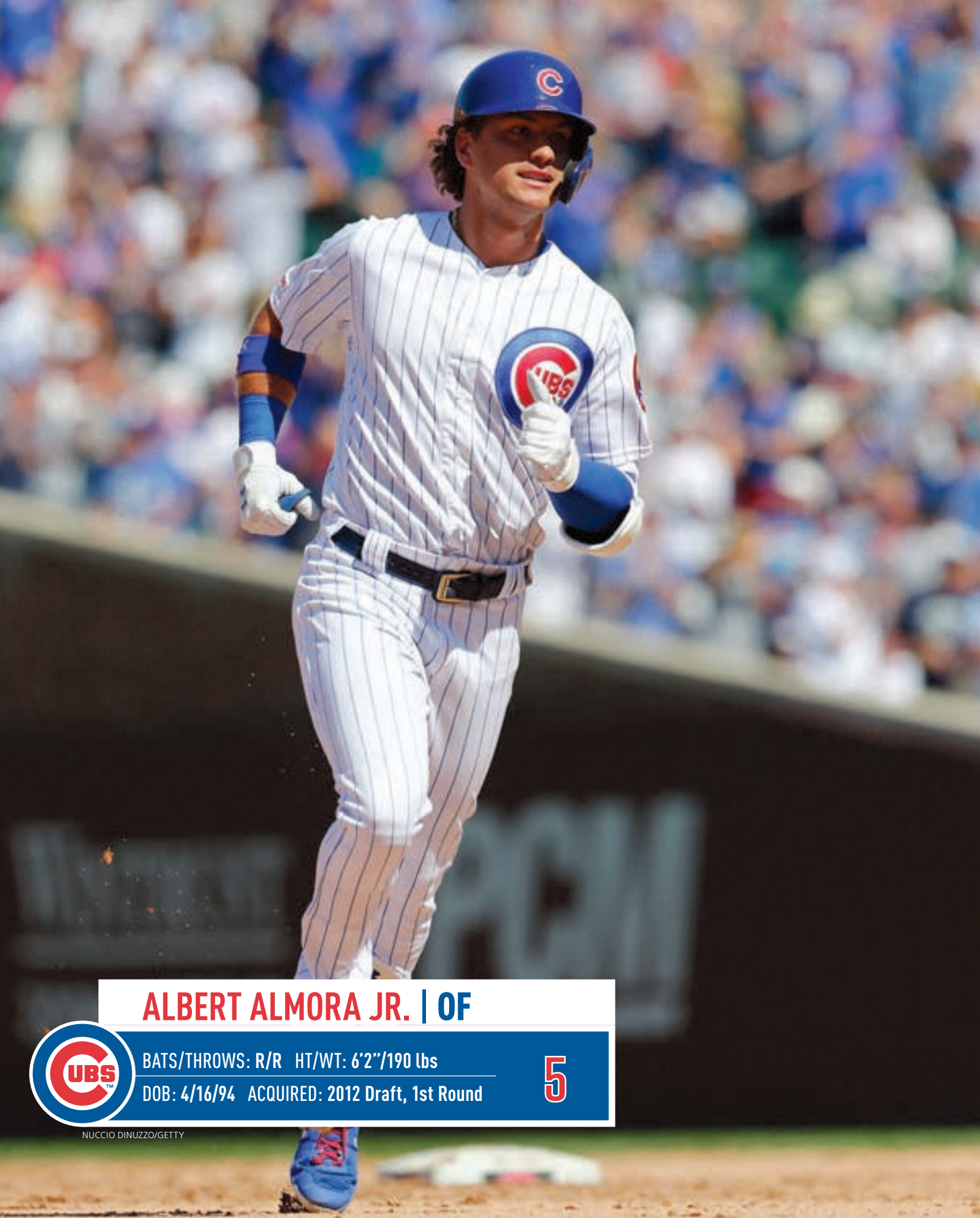

ALBERT ALMORA JR. | OF

BATS/THROWS: **R/R** HT/WT: **6'2"/190 lbs**

DOB: **4/16/94** ACQUIRED: **2012 Draft, 1st Round**

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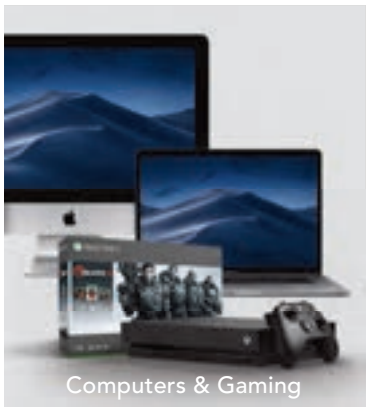
DOB: **12/1/92** ACQUIRED: **2011 Draft, 1st Round**

9

STEPHEN GREEN



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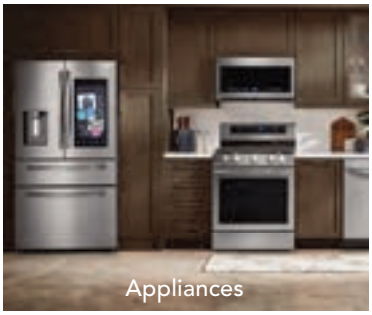

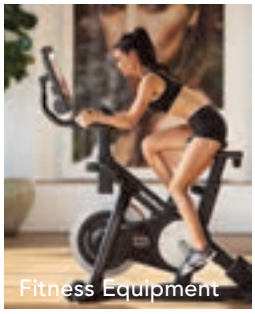

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KRIS BRYANT | INF

BATS/THROWS: **R/R** HT/WT: **6'5"/230 lbs**

DOB: **1/4/92** ACQUIRED: **2013 Draft, 1st Round**

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7

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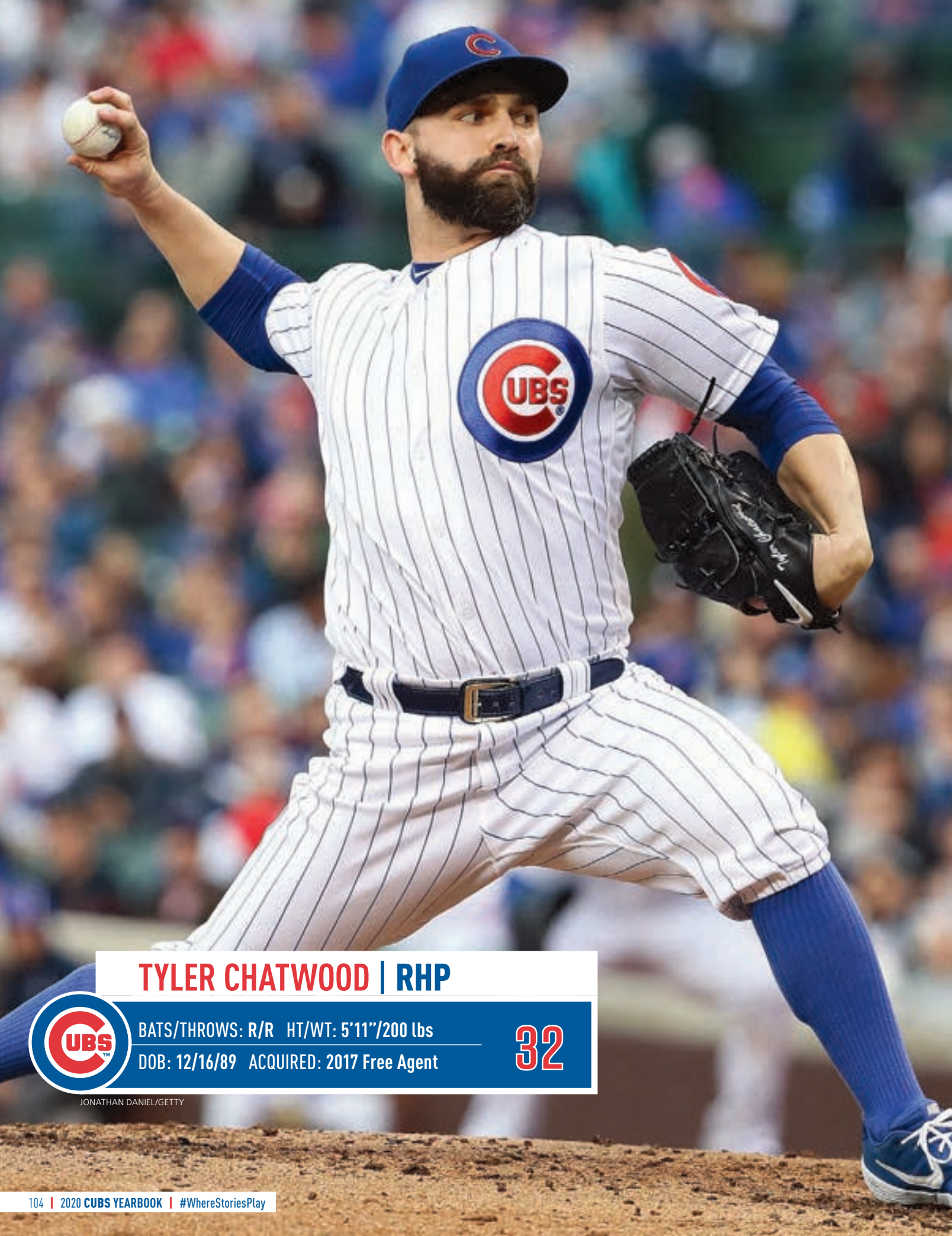

TYLER CHATWOOD | RHP

BATS/THROWS: **R/R** HT/WT: **5'11"/200 lbs**

DOB: **12/16/89** ACQUIRED: **2017 Free Agent**

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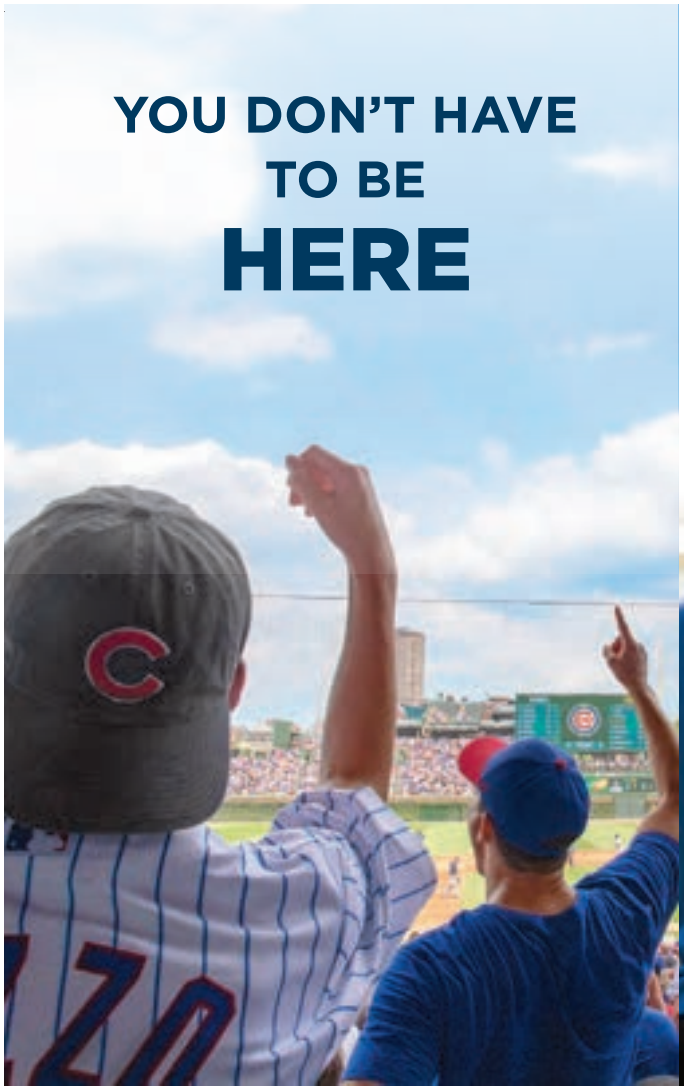
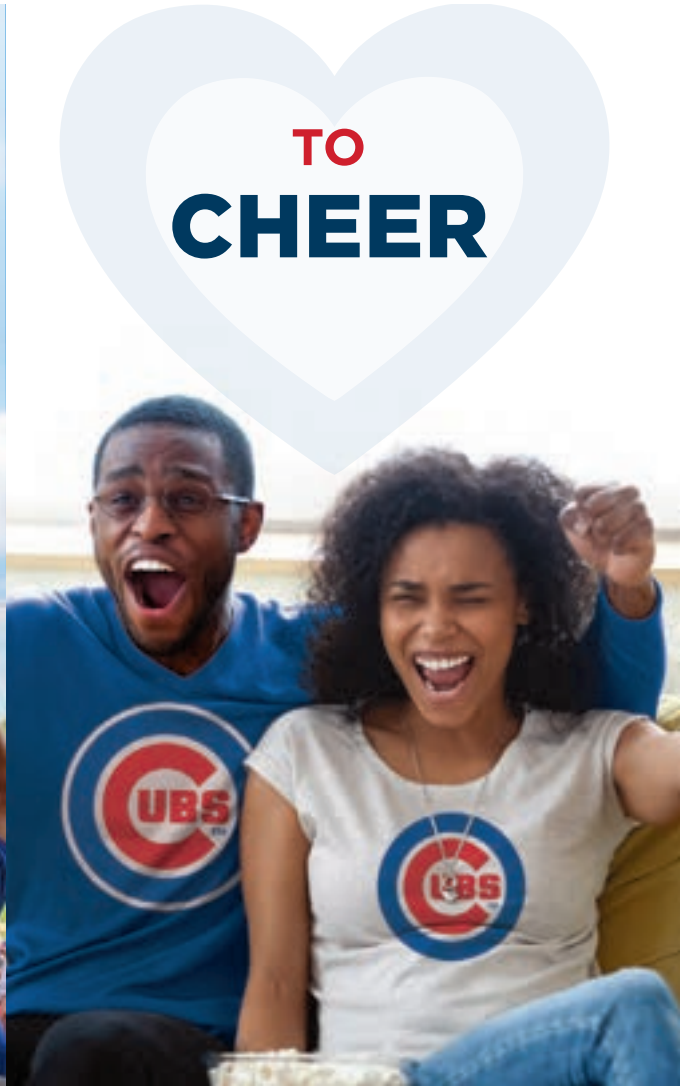
DOB: **8/16/86** ACQUIRED: **2018 Free Agent**

11

JONATHAN DANIEL/GETTY





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1. Hugh Calkins, Gerhard Hindricks, Ricardo Cappato, et al, 2017 HRS/EHRA/ECAS/APHRS/SOLAECE expert consensus statement on catheter ablation and surgical ablation of atrial fibrillation, 2017.

2. Natale A, Reddy VY, Monir G, Wilber DJ, Lindsay BD, McElderry HT, Kantipudi C, Mansour MC, Melby DP, Packer DL, Nakagawa H, Paroxysmal AF catheter ablation with a contact force sensing catheter: results of the prospective, multicenter SMART-AF trial. Journal of the American College of Cardiology. 2014 Aug 19;64(7):647-56.

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IAN HAPP | INF/OF

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DOB: 8/12/94 ACQUIRED: 2015 Draft, 1st Round

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KYLE HENDRICKS | RHP

BATS/THROWS: **R/R** HT/WT: **6'3"/190 lbs**

DOB: **12/7/89** ACQUIRED: **2012 Trade (Rangers)**

28

JONATHAN DANIEL/GETTY

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JASON HEYWARD | OF

BATS/THROWS: L/L HT/WT: 6'5"/240 lbs

DOB: 8/9/89 ACQUIRED: 2015 Free Agent

22

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NICO HOERNER | INF

BATS/THROWS: **R/R** HT/WT: **6'1"/200 lbs**

DOB: **5/13/97** ACQUIRED: **2018 Draft, 1st Round**

2

QUINN HARRIS/GETTY

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JEREMY JEFFRESS | RHP

BATS/THROWS: **R/R** HT/WT: **6'0"/205 lbs**

DOB: **9/21/87** ACQUIRED: **2020 Free Agent**

24

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CRAIG KIMBREL | RHP

BATS/THROWS: **R/R** HT/WT: **6'0"/215 lbs**

DOB: **5/28/88** ACQUIRED: **2019 Free Agent**

46

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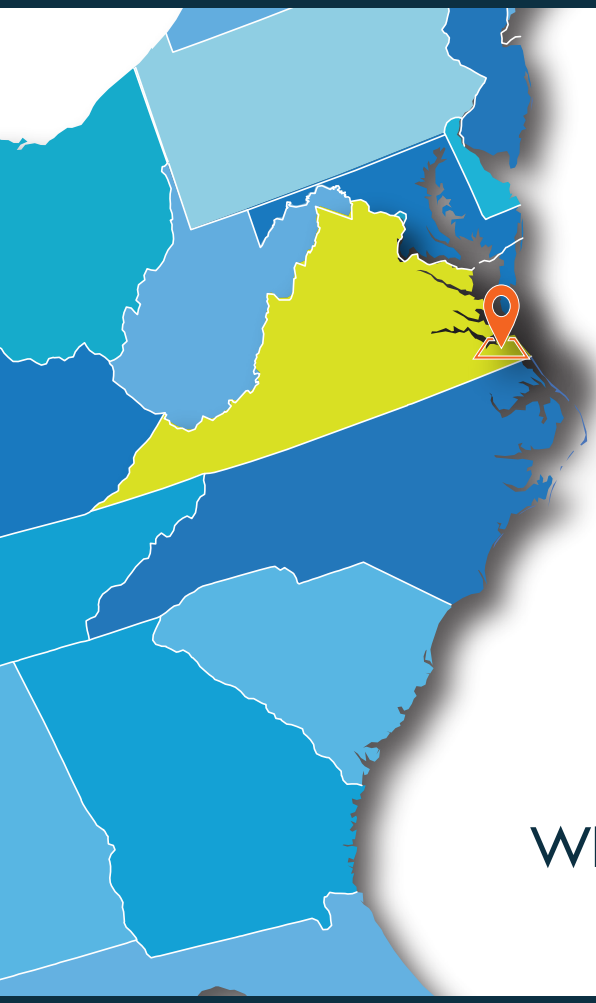

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JON LESTER | LHP

BATS/THROWS: L/L HT/WT: 6'4"/240 lbs

DOB: 1/7/84 ACQUIRED: 2014 Free Agent

34

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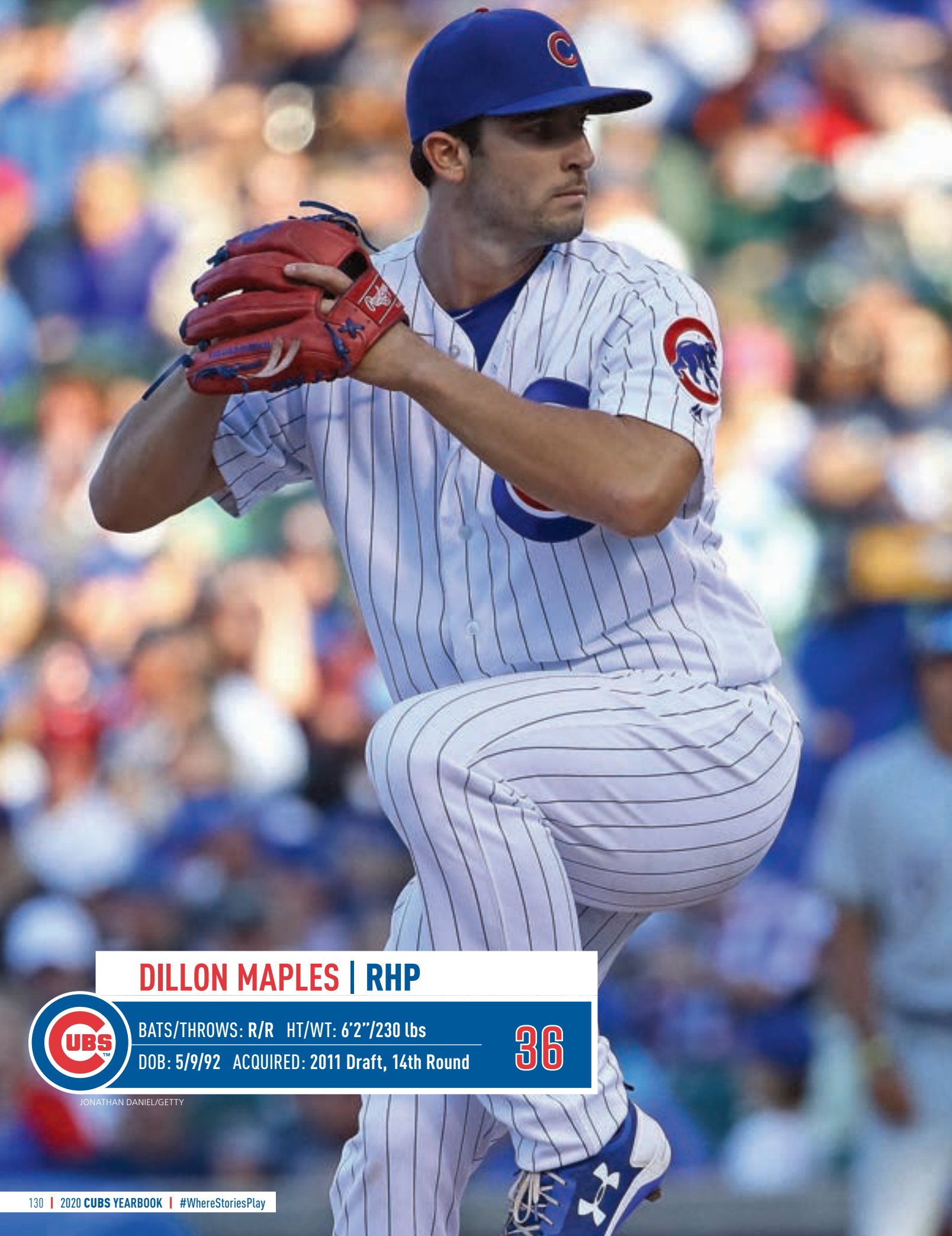

DILLON MAPLES | RHP

BATS/THROWS: **R/R** HT/WT: **6'2"/230 lbs**

DOB: **5/9/92** ACQUIRED: **2011 Draft, 14th Round**

36

JONATHAN DANIEL/GETTY

McCain

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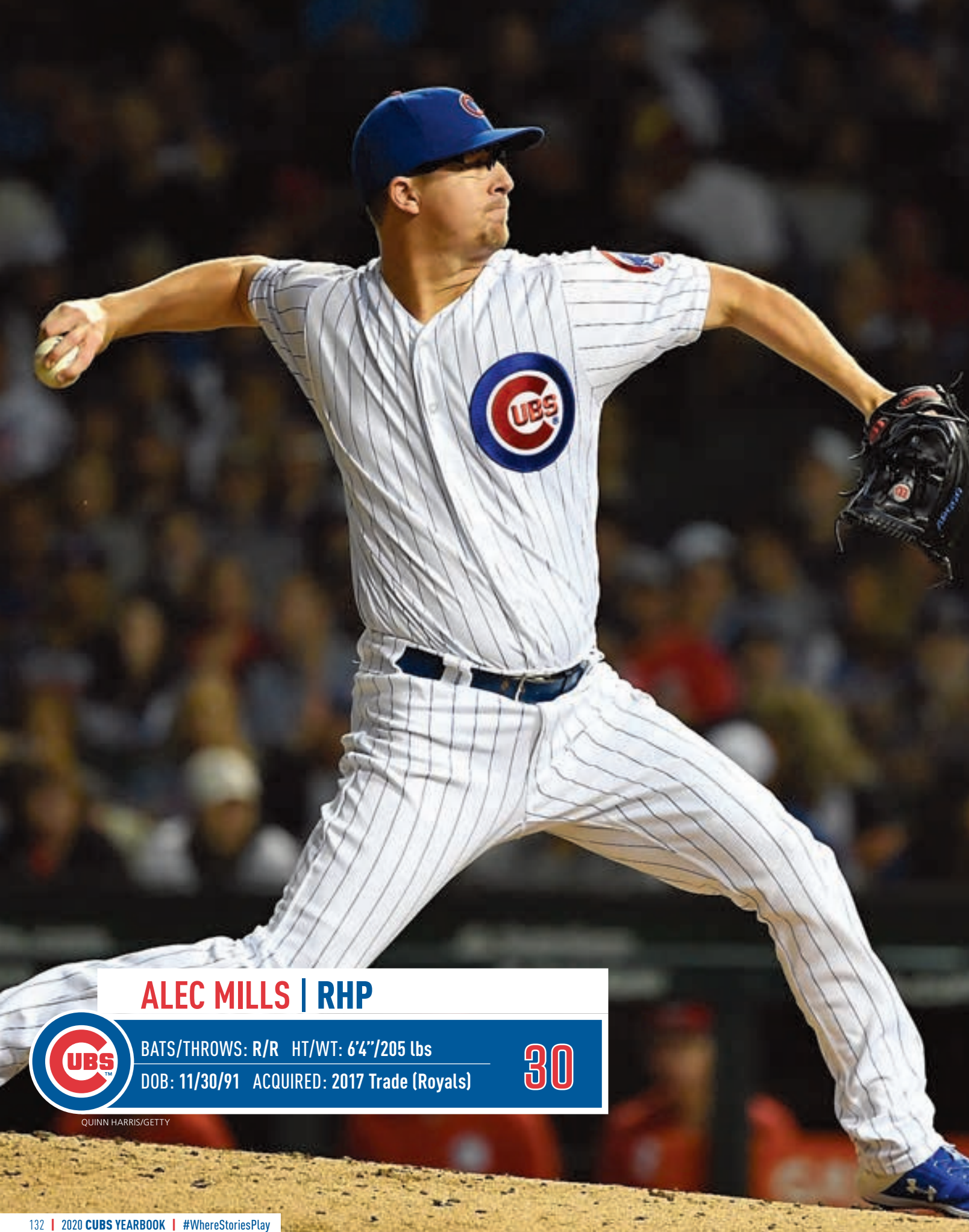

ALEC MILLS | RHP

BATS/THROWS: **R/R** HT/WT: **6'4"/205 lbs**

DOB: **11/30/91** ACQUIRED: **2017 Trade (Royals)**

30

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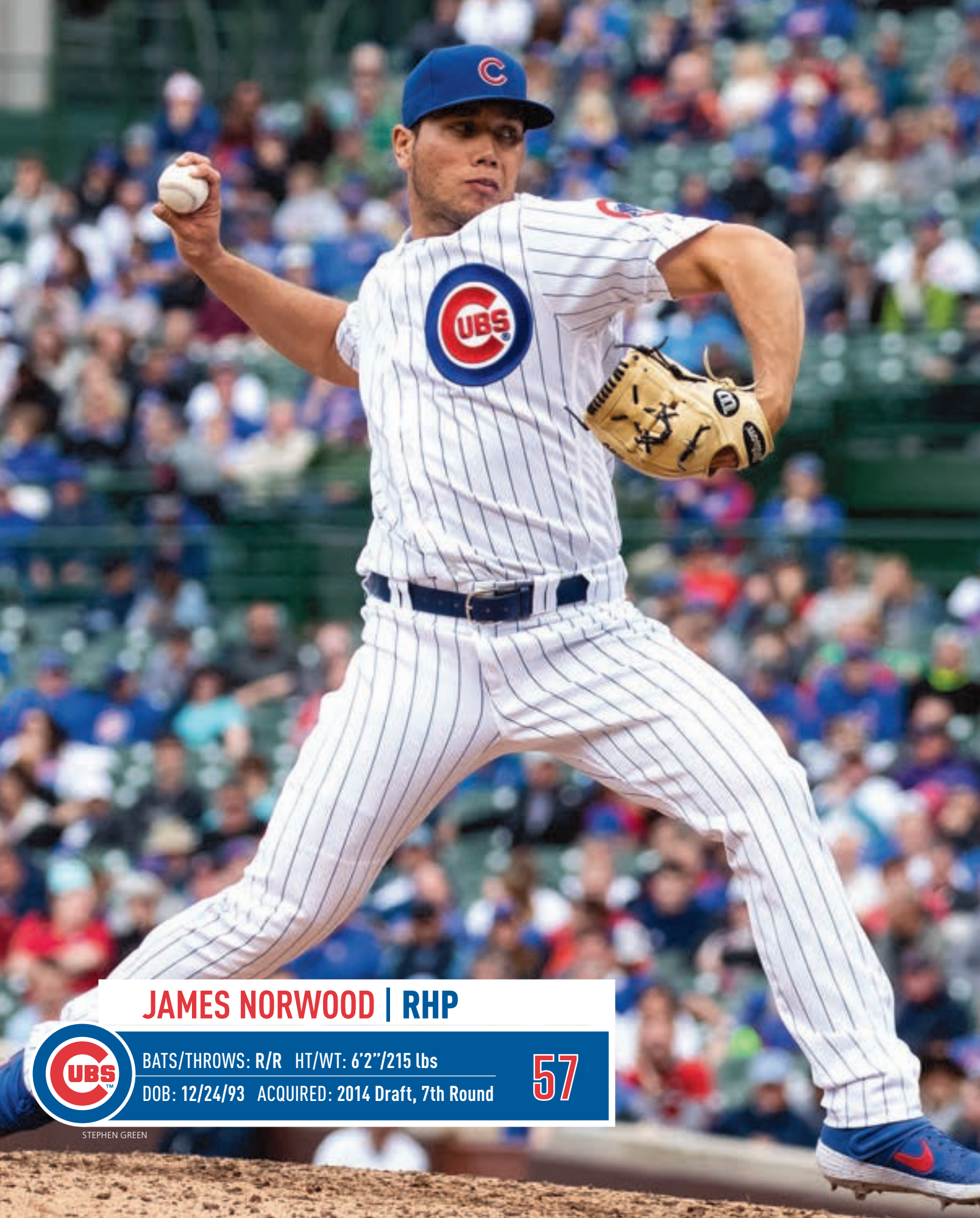

JAMES NORWOOD | RHP

BATS/THROWS: **R/R** HT/WT: **6'2"/215 lbs**

DOB: **12/24/93** ACQUIRED: **2014 Draft, 7th Round**

57

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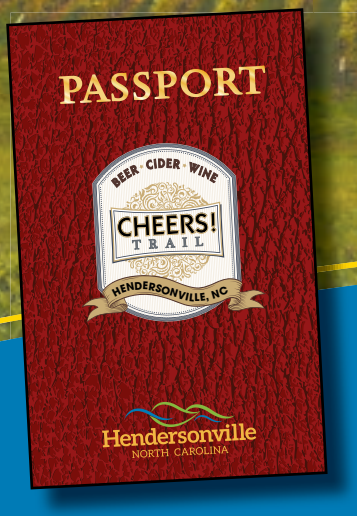

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JOSÉ QUINTANA | LHP

BATS/THROWS: **R/L** HT/WT: **6'1"/220 lbs**

DOB: **1/24/89** ACQUIRED: **2017 Trade (White Sox)**

62

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BATS/THROWS: **R/R** HT/WT: **6'5"/235 lbs**

DOB: **7/1/90** ACQUIRED: **2019 Free Agent**

20

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ANTHONY RIZZO | INF

BATS/THROWS: L/L HT/WT: 6'3"/240 lbs

DOB: 8/8/89 ACQUIRED: 2012 Trade (Padres)

44

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KYLE RYAN | LHP

BATS/THROWS: L/L HT/WT: 6'5"/215 lbs

DOB: 9/25/91 ACQUIRED: 2017 Free Agent

56

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CASEY SADLER | RHP

BATS/THROWS: **R/R** HT/WT: **6'3"/205 lbs**

DOB: **7/13/90** ACQUIRED: **2020 Trade (Dodgers)**

65

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KYLE SCHWARBER | OF

BATS/THROWS: L/R HT/WT: 6'0"/225 lbs

DOB: 3/5/93 ACQUIRED: 2014 Draft, 1st Round

12

JONATHAN DANIEL/GETTY

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STEVEN SOUZA JR. | OF

BATS/THROWS: **R/R** HT/WT: **6'4"/225 lbs**

DOB: **4/24/89** ACQUIRED: **2020 Free Agent**

21

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RYAN TEPERA | RHP

BATS/THROWS: **R/R** HT/WT: **6'1"/195 lbs**

DOB: **11/3/87** ACQUIRED: **2019 Free Agent**

52

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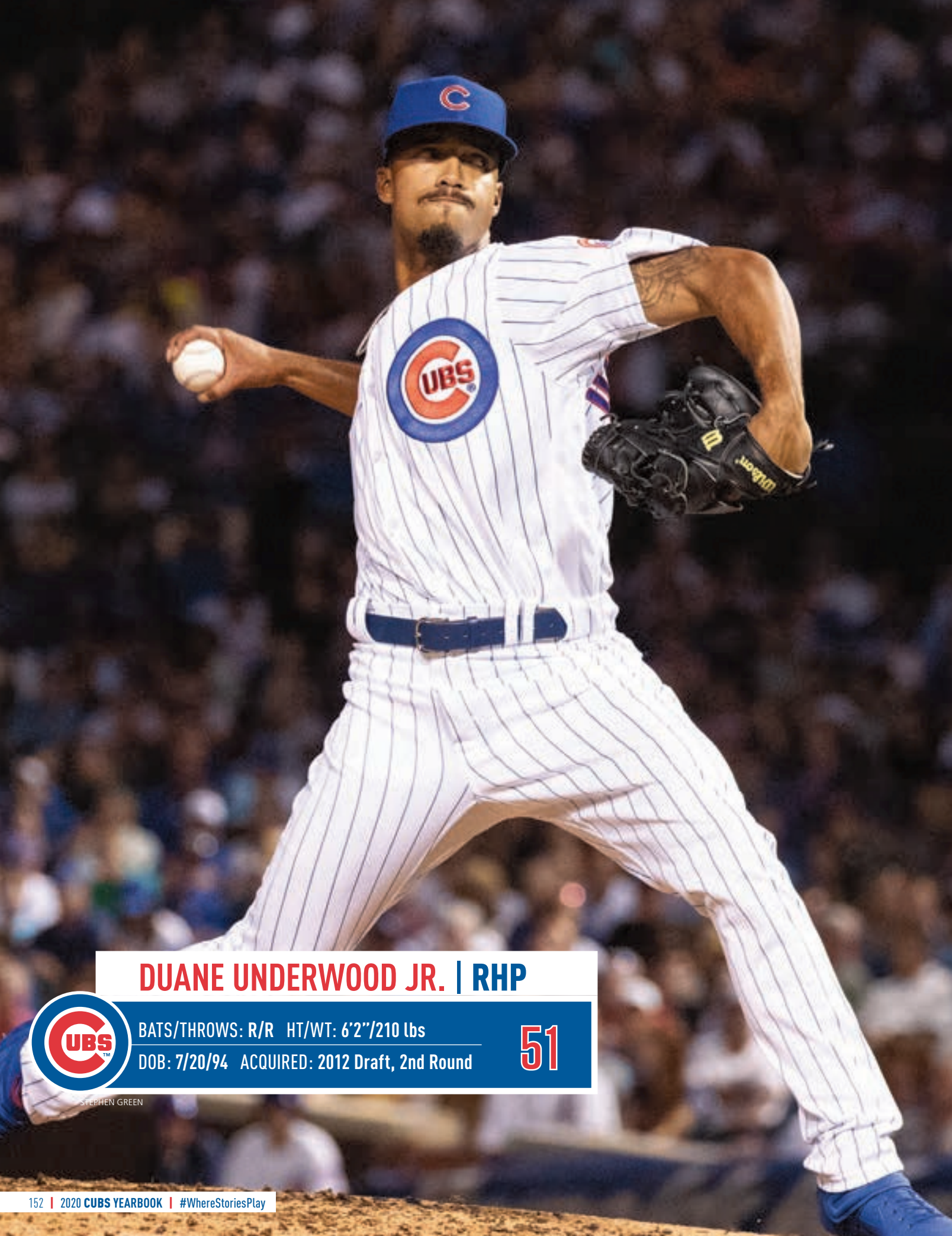

DUANE UNDERWOOD JR. | RHP

BATS/THROWS: **R/R** HT/WT: **6'2"/210 lbs**

DOB: **7/20/94** ACQUIRED: **2012 Draft, 2nd Round**

51

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ROWAN WICK | RHP

BATS/THROWS: L/R HT/WT: 6'3"/234 lbs

DOB: 11/9/92 ACQUIRED: 2018 Trade (Padres)

50

STEPHEN GREEN

Dream IN COLOR

Explore a portrait of prairie wonder in Watertown, South Dakota.

Watertown has a story to tell. You can hear it whispered by the ornate arches on Kemp Avenue, taste it in local fare, and feel it in a gold-soaked sunset over Lake Kampeska. This is where life slows down and your creative spirit soars. You'll see why after spending a few days in this picturesque haven.

A walk through the ages on Kemp Avenue leads past 60 buildings on the National Register of Historic Places, some pre-dating South Dakota statehood itself. The same area is also home to a bevy of locally-inspired dishes and drink, adding up for one indelible dining experience. Fill up on chislic, award-winning pizza, or whatever you're craving that day- you're sure to find eats perfect for your palate. Tickle your sweet tooth at the Watertown Confectionery and Ghost Town Winery, where you'll find hand-dipped chocolates and house-bottled wines. You can also drink like the locals at Watertown Brewing Company and Dempsey's Brewing.

A hub of prairie culture, Watertown has a flourishing arts community you might think impossible in a town of 20,000. Those in search of inspiration will find it at the Terry Redlin Art Center, where 165 original oil paintings immortalize the rural scenes of Redlin's youth. Outside the museum is the beginning of the Watertown Artwalk, a path of 12 sculptures gracing uptown.

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BRAD WIECK | LHP

BATS/THROWS: L/L HT/WT: 6'8"/257 lbs

DOB: 10/14/91 ACQUIRED: 2019 Trade (Padres)

38

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DAN WINKLER | RHP

BATS/THROWS: **R/R** HT/WT: **6'3"/210 lbs**

DOB: **2/2/90** ACQUIRED: **2019 Free Agent**

43

CHRISTIAN PETERSEN/GETTY

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MIGUEL AMAYA | C

BATS/THROWS: R/R HT/WT: 6'2"/230 lbs

DOB: 3/9/99 ACQUIRED: 2015 NDFA

75

BUCK DAVIDSON

TREVOR MEGILL | RHP

BATS/THROWS: L/R HT/WT: 6'8"/250 lbs

DOB: 12/5/93 ACQUIRED: 2019 Rule 5 (Padres)

29

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TYSON MILLER | RHP

BATS/THROWS: R/R HT/WT: 6'4"/225 lbs

DOB: 7/29/95 ACQUIRED: 2016 Draft, 4th Round

72

STEPHEN GREEN

MANUEL RODRÍGUEZ | RHP

BATS/THROWS: R/R HT/WT: 5'11"/210 lbs

DOB: 8/6/96 ACQUIRED: 2016 NDFA

77

STEPHEN GREEN

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ZACK SHORT | INF

BATS/THROWS: R/R HT/WT: 5'10"/180 lbs

DOB: 5/29/95 ACQUIRED: 2016 Draft, 17th Round

76

STEPHEN GREEN

JUSTIN STEELE | LHP

BATS/THROWS: L/L HT/WT: 6'2"/205 lbs

DOB: 7/11/95 ACQUIRED: 2014 Draft, 5th Round

74

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JASON ADAM | RHP

BATS/THROWS: R/R HT/WT: 6'3"/229 lbs
DOB: 8/4/91 ACQUIRED: 2020 Free Agent

60

CARLOS ASUAJE | INF

BATS/THROWS: L/R HT/WT: 5'8"/160 lbs
DOB: 11/2/91 ACQUIRED: 2020 Free Agent

61

REX BROTHERS | LHP

BATS/THROWS: L/L HT/WT: 6'0"/205 lbs
DOB: 12/18/87 ACQUIRED: 2019 Free Agent

48

NOEL CUEVAS | OF

BATS/THROWS: R/R HT/WT: 6'2"/224 lbs
DOB: 10/2/91 ACQUIRED: 2019 Free Agent

66

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OSCAR DE LA CRUZ | RHP

BATS/THROWS: R/R HT/WT: 6'6"/250 lbs
DOB: 3/4/95 ACQUIRED: 2012 NDFA

71

TRENT GIAMBRONE | INF

BATS/THROWS: R/R HT/WT: 5'8"/175 lbs
DOB: 12/20/93 ACQUIRED: 2016 Draft, 25th Round

85

P.J. HIGGINS | C

BATS/THROWS: R/R HT/WT: 5'10"/195 lbs
DOB: 5/10/93 ACQUIRED: 2015 Draft, 12th Round

86

DANNY HULTZEN | LHP

BATS/THROWS: L/L HT/WT: 6'3"/210 lbs
DOB: 11/28/89 ACQUIRED: 2019 Free Agent

39

PHOTOS BY ADAM GLANZMAN/GETTY

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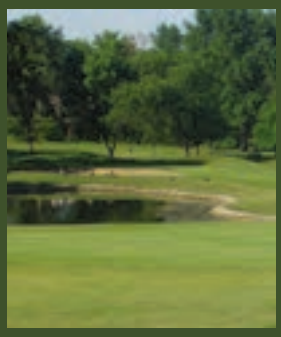

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CORBAN JOSEPH | INF

BATS/THROWS: L/R HT/WT: 6'0"/185 lbs
DOB: 10/28/88 ACQUIRED: 2020 Free Agent

88

JASON KIPNIS | INF

BATS/THROWS: L/R HT/WT: 5'11"/200 lbs
DOB: 4/3/87 ACQUIRED: 2020 Free Agent

27

DAKOTA MEKKES | RHP

BATS/THROWS: R/R HT/WT: 6'7"/275 lbs
DOB: 11/6/94 ACQUIRED: 2016 Draft, 10th Round

89

IAN MILLER | OF

BATS/THROWS: L/R HT/WT: 6'0"/170 lbs
DOB: 2/21/92 ACQUIRED: 2019 Free Agent

79

PHOTOS BY ADAM GLANZMAN/GETTY

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BRANDON MORROW | RHP

BATS/THROWS: R/R HT/WT: 6'3"/207 lbs
DOB: 7/26/84 ACQUIRED: 2019 Free Agent

15

TYLER OLSON | LHP

BATS/THROWS: R/L HT/WT: 6'3"/205 lbs
DOB: 10/2/89 ACQUIRED: 2020 Free Agent

59

C.D. PELHAM | LHP

BATS/THROWS: R/L HT/WT: 6'6"/238 lbs
DOB: 2/21/95 ACQUIRED: 2019 Waivers (Rangers)

64

HERNÁN PÉREZ | INF/OF

BATS/THROWS: R/R HT/WT: 6'1"/213 lbs
DOB: 3/26/91 ACQUIRED: 2019 Free Agent

41

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ADAM GLANZMAN/GETTY

JOSH PHEGLEY | C

BATS/THROWS: R/R HT/WT: 5'10"/225 lbs
DOB: 2/12/88 ACQUIRED: 2020 Free Agent

4

STEPHEN GREEN

MICHAEL RUCKER | RHP

BATS/THROWS: R/R HT/WT: 6'1"/195 lbs
DOB: 4/27/94 ACQUIRED: 2016 Draft, 11th Round

80

ADAM GLANZMAN/GETTY

WYATT SHORT | LHP

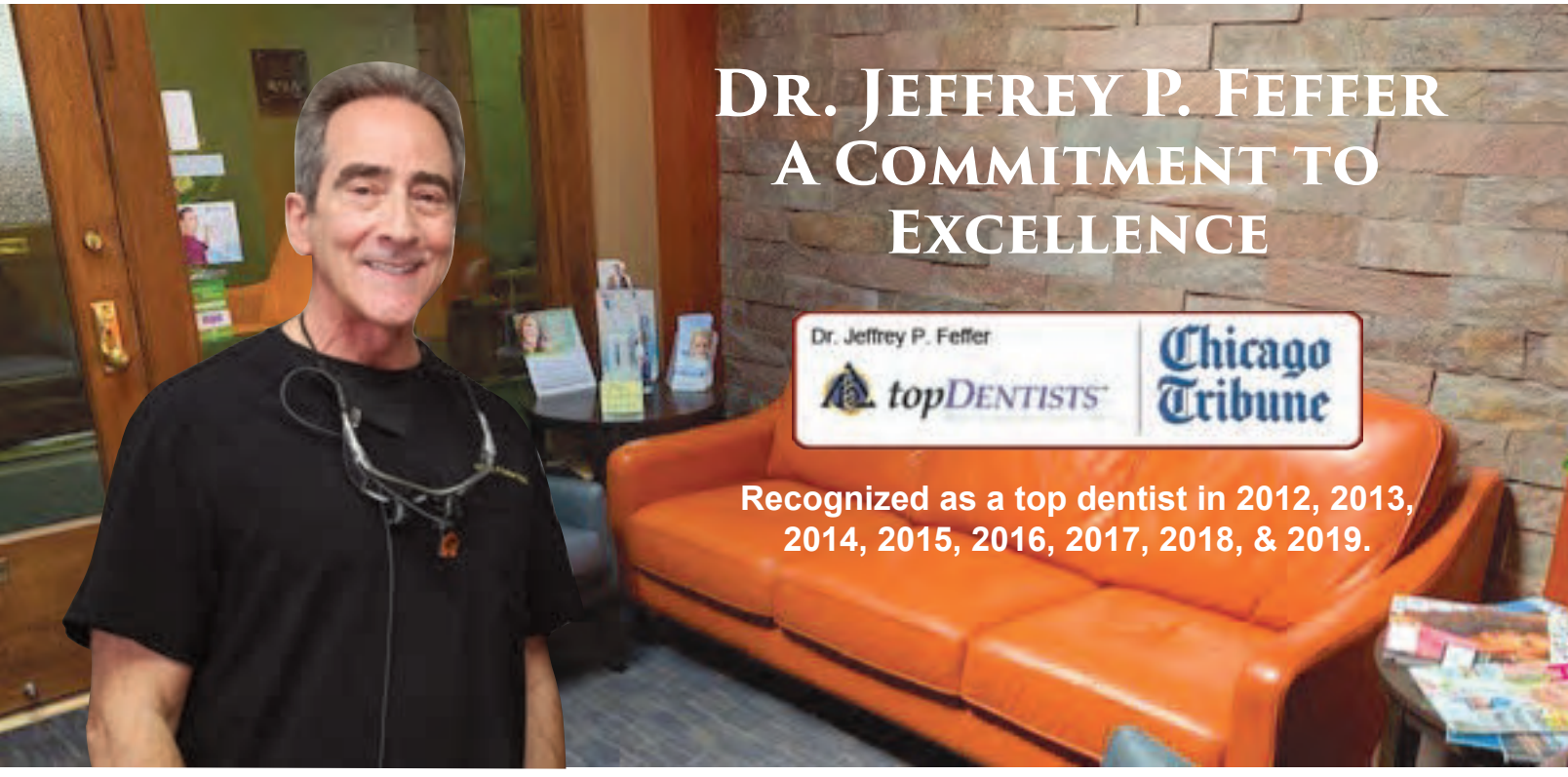
BATS/THROWS: L/L HT/WT: 5'8"/180 lbs
DOB: 10/14/94 ACQUIRED: 2016 Draft, 13th Round

78

CALEB SIMPSON | RHP

BATS/THROWS: R/R HT/WT: 6'4"/231 lbs
DOB: 9/15/91 ACQUIRED: 2019 Free Agent

84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BROCK STEWART | RHP

BATS/THROWS: L/R HT/WT: 6'3"/220 lbs
DOB: 10/3/91 ACQUIRED: 2019 Rule 5 (Blue Jays)

87

BEN TAYLOR | RHP

BATS/THROWS: R/R HT/WT: 6'3"/225 lbs
DOB: 11/12/92 ACQUIRED: 2019 Free Agent

67

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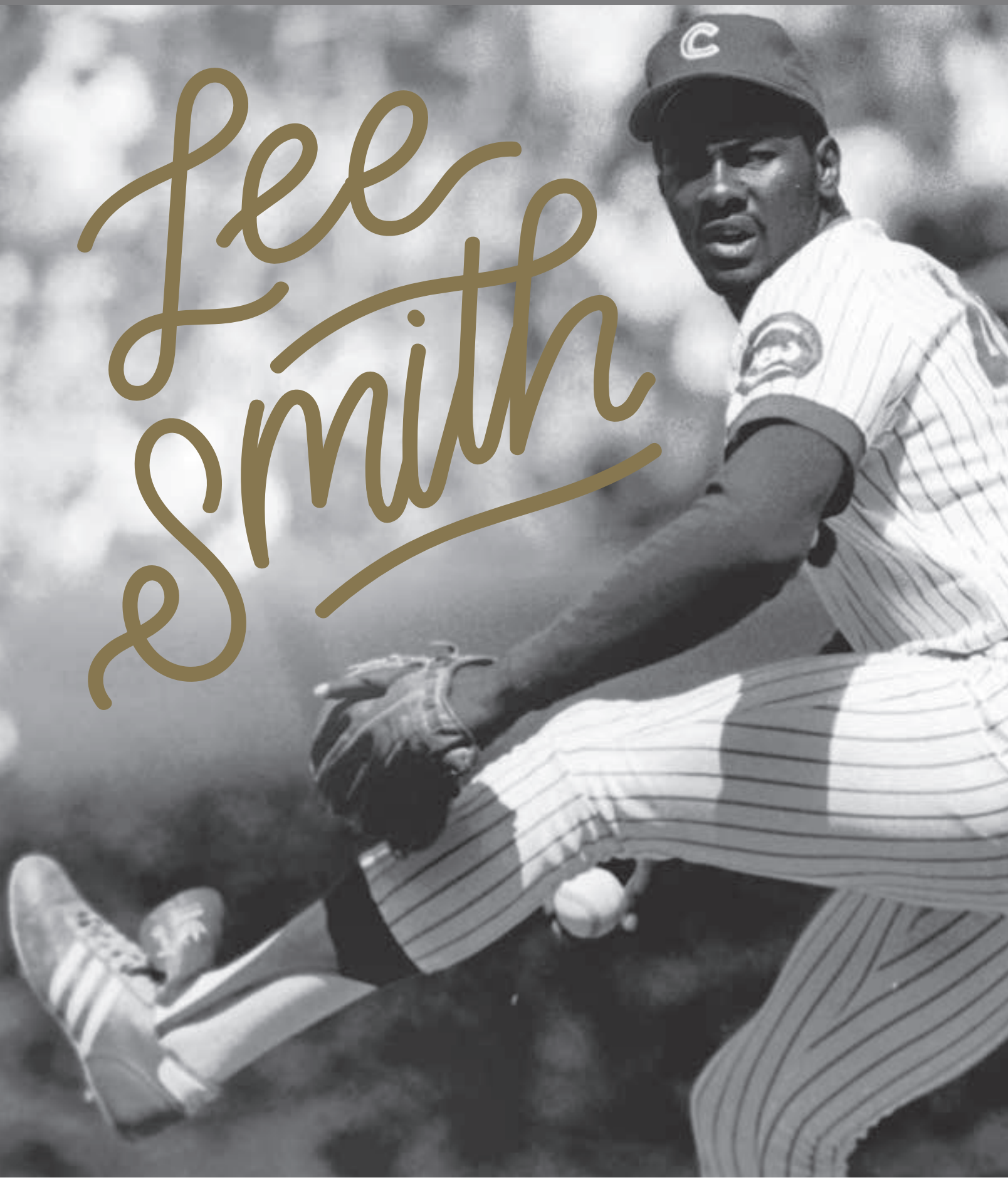
Lee Smith



LAST SUMMER, THE FORMER CUBS GREAT FINALLY RECEIVED HIS LONG-AWAITED CALL TO THE HALL.

BY CARRIE MUSKAT

If Lee Smith had been better at basketball, he never would have gotten into the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.

"Basketball was my first love," Smith said. "I found out I had a better fastball than a jump shot."

It took some convincing, though, to get Smith to focus on baseball, including a pep talk from Cubs great Billy Williams.

On July 21, 2019, Smith joined baseball's elite, including Williams, when he was inducted into the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. The gentle giant, who would slowly ramble to the bullpen and then blow hitters away with his fastball, was elected by the Today's Game Era Committee along with slugger Harold Baines. Smith was on the Baseball Writers Association of America ballot for 15 years before becoming eligible for the committee's consideration.

At the time of his retirement, the former Cubs closer was baseball's all-time saves leader with 478 and had topped the 30-save

mark 10 times. A seven-time All-Star, he held that record for 13 years before Trevor Hoffman passed him in 2006. Smith is now third in all-time saves behind Mariano Rivera (652 saves) and Hoffman (601).

Smith graduated from Castor High School in Louisiana.

Smith was also talented in basketball and was signed to play at Northwestern State in Natchitoches, Louisiana.

WHAT THE HELL IS PULPWOOD?

YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW, AND I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT.

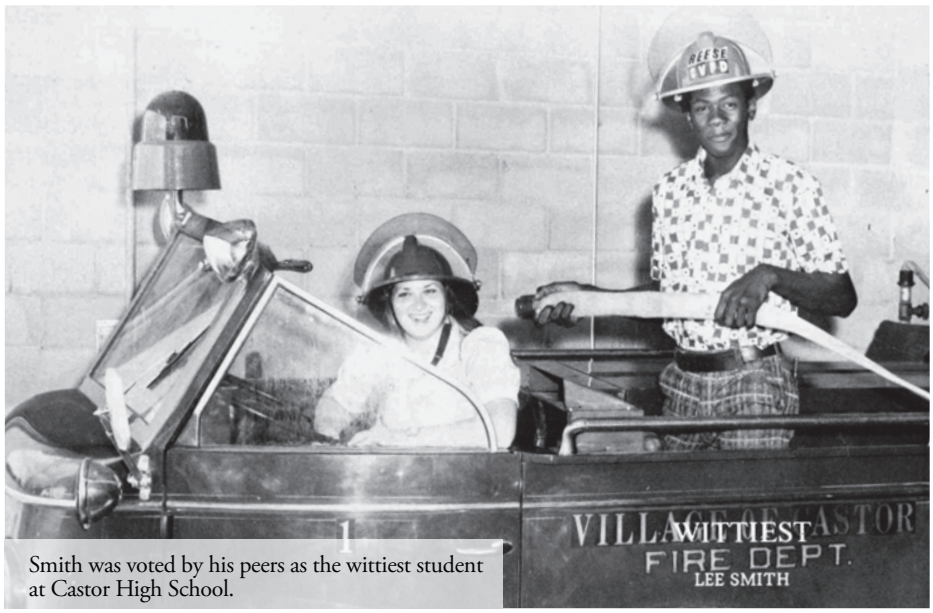
Playing professional baseball wasn't on Smith's radar when he was pitching at Castor (La.) High School. He'd already signed on to play basketball at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, Louisiana, when a scout saw him pitch, although the scout was there to look at another player who was a nephew of big leaguer Vida Blue.

"I ended up pitching against [Blue's nephew], and they asked, 'Who's the other guy?' And it ended up being me," Smith said.

In high school, Smith was throwing 90 mph fastballs. So how did he get to be so strong? He lifted pulpwood. The sticks were about six-feet long, and Smith would pick them up from the ground and toss them to the top of a truck.

"All the guys asked me, 'Hey, Smitty, what do you do to work out to get so big?'" Smith said. "I said I hauled pulpwood. They said, 'What the hell is pulpwood?' I said, 'You don't want to know, and I don't want to talk about it.'"

The Cubs' second-round pick in the 1975 draft, Smith was a starting pitcher for his first four minor-league seasons. In 1979 at Double-A Midland, the Cubs decided to move Smith to the bullpen. The right-hander resisted. Other pitchers on the Midland team were being called up to Triple-A. Smith decided he'd rather go home to Louisiana and play basketball.



Smith was voted by his peers as the wittiest student at Castor High School.

Williams, who was the Cubs' roving hitting coach at the time, went to Midland to give Smith a pep talk.

"He started complaining — 'They won't call me up,'" Williams said of a conversation he had while Smith drove the coach back to his hotel. "He said, 'I might give up this game.' I said, 'Don't do that. You're talking about all those pitchers being called up from Double-A to Triple-A. All you do is go out and play basketball.'"

Smith did like to play hoops in the afternoon. The problem was it was generally 110 degrees in Texas at that time of day. When Midland manager Randy Hundley would call on Smith to pitch, the right-hander was gassed.

"I said, 'When you start getting people out in Double-A, they're going to bring you to Triple-A. You can't get people out in Double-A,'" Williams said. "That made him pretty ticked off. I thought he was going to swing at me."

Williams was the perfect person to deliver the message. He had gotten the same tough talk from scout Buck O'Neil when Williams was struggling in the minors and went home to Whistler, Alabama. As Cubs fans know, Williams did return to the game and had a Hall of Fame career himself.

Smith remembers the talk.

"At that time, it was like a slap in the face," Smith said about being moved to the bullpen. "'Hey, you're not good enough to start.' In that day, the relievers didn't pitch until the starters got knocked out. I actually quit and went home. We can't print what [Williams] actually said, but he made a good impression on me."

Williams, who turned 82 in June, laughs now at his scolding.

"He says, 'You were kind of hard on me, but I really appreciate what you did,'" Williams said. "Buck and myself, we saw the potential. A guy who could throw the ball like that — he was throwing all fastballs. He was just throwing the ball by people."

Smith (No. 24) rises above the competition on the basketball court.

> WHEN YOU START GETTING PEOPLE OUT IN DOUBLE-A, THEY'RE GOING TO BRING YOU TO TRIPLE-A. YOU CAN'T GET PEOPLE OUT IN DOUBLE-A.
>
> BILLY WILLIAMS

Fred Martin, a pitching coach in the Cubs organization who taught future Hall of Fame reliever Bruce Sutter how to throw a split-finger pitch, helped Smith add a slider to his repertoire. Another future Cooperstown-bound pitcher, Fergie Jenkins, gave Smith advice on how to throw a curveball.

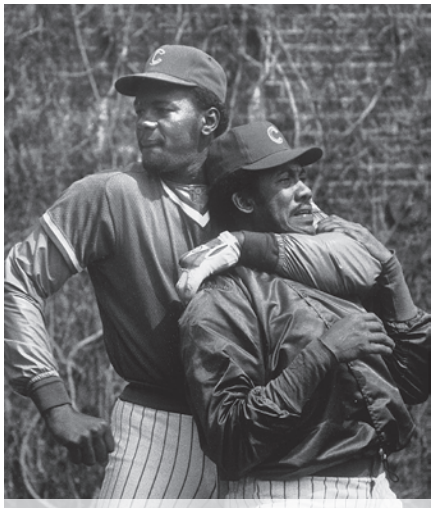
Now, Smith, 62, offers advice as a roving minor-league pitching instructor in the San Francisco Giants organization.

"You just try to make things simple," Smith said of his talks with young pitchers. "I think now the kids have a lot more information than we did back in the day. We had a lot of on-the-job training. Back then, we just threw and tried to figure it out."

But it wasn't easy for Smith to make that transition to the bullpen.

"The one thing I really prided myself on was being available when the manager called,"

Smith said. "I didn't know how my arm was going to bounce back after throwing. A lot of people don't realize you can warm up twice and not get in the game. It probably doesn't happen that much anymore, but back then, when they said, 'Hey, Smitty, from the seventh inning on, you could be in the game,' I'd warm up in the seventh inning, in the eighth inning. Or I could warm up in the sixth inning and pitch in the seventh. When you're in Wrigley Field, a two-run lead don't mean nothing."



Smith horses around with Fergie Jenkins prior to a game.

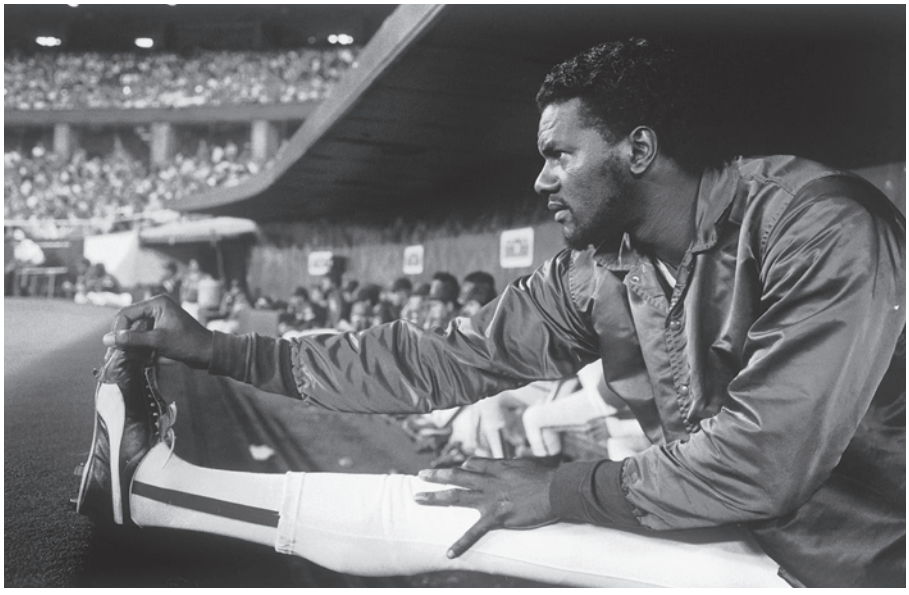
When he pitched for the Cubs, the bullpen was next to the left field line, and Smith would play catch with the outfielders between innings to keep his arm loose. Of course, that didn't happen until he sauntered down to the bullpen late in the game.

"It took him about a half an inning to get to the bullpen he walked so slow," Williams said, laughing.

Smith admits he did nap early in games, sometimes finding a comfortable spot on the floor. Either longtime clubhouse manager Yosh Kawano or one of the Cubs athletic trainers was assigned the task of waking him up in time for the late innings.

"When they called him to come into the game, it was lights out," Williams said.

But those naps weren't the reason Smith took his time. If the Cubs' game went past 4:30 p.m., Smith knew the Wrigley Field grounds crew would get paid overtime.



"He said, 'I'm trying to put your kids through school,'" said Rick Fuhs, who has been part of the grounds crew since 1978.

Fuhs and his wife were among Smith's guests in Cooperstown. Fuhs used to bring homemade chocolate chip cookies to Smith on gamedays.

Of course, there was another reason Smith didn't hurry to the mound.

"You didn't want to go rushing out there to face Mike Schmidt, so I was taking my time to figure this out before I got out there," Smith said. "I think Mike Schmidt hit every day."

It just seemed that way. Schmidt did hit 50 home runs at Wrigley Field in his career and went deep five times against Smith, including a grand slam on Aug. 15, 1983.

Despite the homers, Schmidt did not enjoy facing Smith either. "In my early days, especially when they had Ferguson Jenkins, I had trouble here," Schmidt said in a UPI story in August 1987. "Now they've got Lee Smith, and when he is throwing at 5:30 p.m. late in the day, it's murder."

In his 18 seasons, Smith also pitched for the Red Sox, Cardinals, Yankees, Orioles, Angels, Reds and Expos. But he'll be wearing a Cubs cap on his Hall of Fame plaque.

"The Cubs were my first break into the big leagues," Smith said. "For me, it couldn't have been a better city. The fans there were so hungry to win a World Series. We came so close in '84 and came up short. I think it was discouraging a little bit to not be able to bring it to Chicago during my days. These guys playing now, it wouldn't surprise me if they did it again."

Does Smith ever imagine what it would be like to pitch today?

Lee Smith

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THIRD-MOST IN MLB HISTORY

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MOST IN FRANCHISE HISTORY

8 SEASONS WITH CUBS
2.92 ERA (221 ER/681.1 IP) IN 458 APPEARANCES

18 MAJOR LEAGUE SEASONS
3.03 ERA (434 ER/1,289.1 IP) IN 1,022 APPEARANCES

458 GAMES WITH CUBS
THIRD-MOST IN FRANCHISE HISTORY

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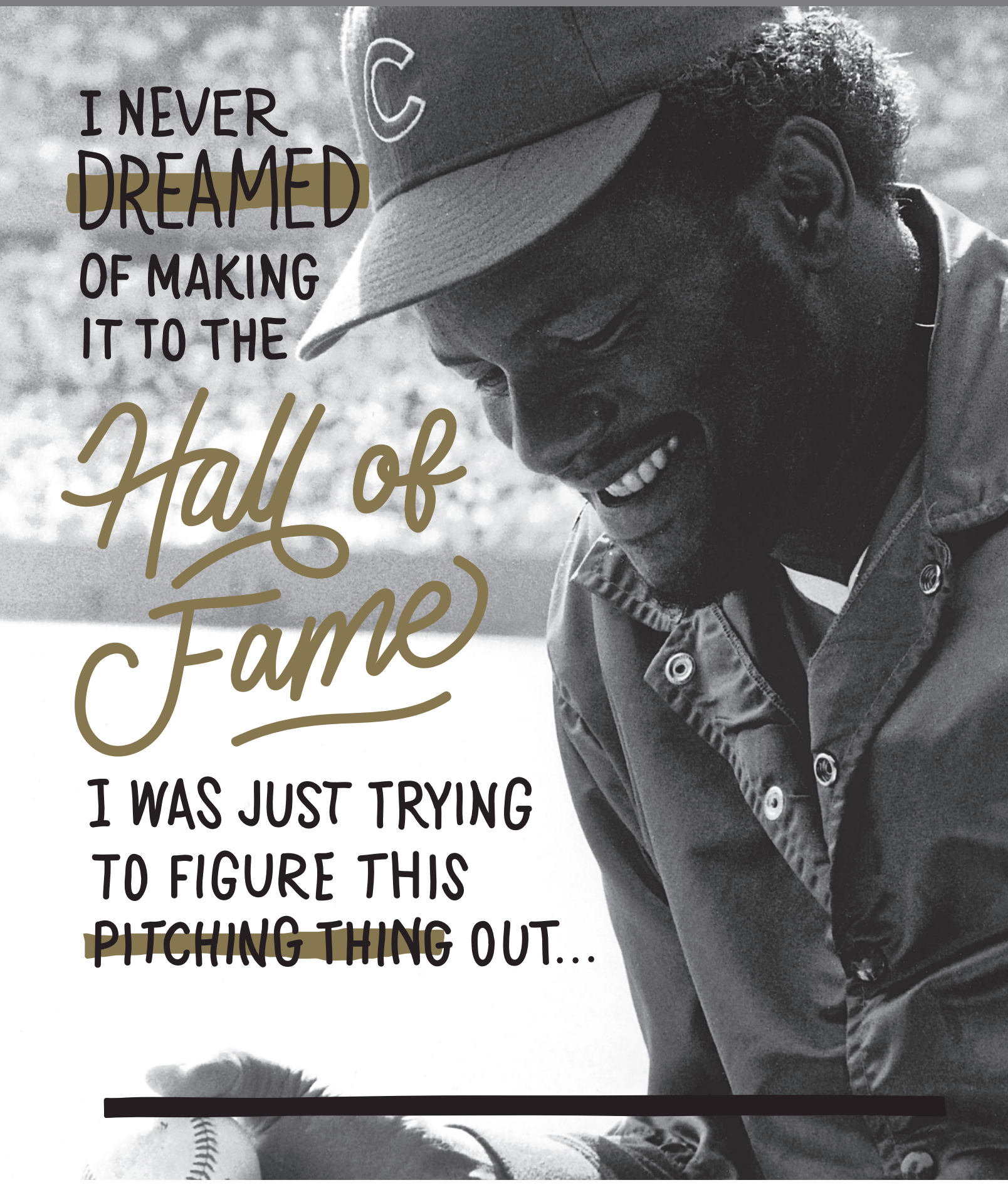
1993 · 1994 · 1995

3X
RELIEVER OF THE YEAR


I NEVER DREAMED OF MAKING IT TO THE Hall of Fame
I WAS JUST TRYING TO FIGURE THIS PITCHING THING OUT...

"I think my arm could handle it," he said, "but I don't know about the rest of my body."

These days, Smith tends his 300-acre farm in Castor, Louisiana, which includes some cows, a feisty bull and lots of trees. How small is Castor? It doesn't have a stop light.

"We have a four-way stop, and some of the older guys forget it's a four-way stop because it used to be a two-way stop. So you have to be pretty careful when you get there," Smith said.

Before tackling the day's chores, he'll drive down to Harold Byrd's convenience store for coffee. Byrd was in eighth grade when Smith was a senior in high school and remembers seeing the right-hander's 90-plus-mph fastballs. The town of Castor, thrilled at Smith's success, has installed a huge poster of the pitcher in town.

"They tell me the table that I sit with them, they named the table the 'College of Knowledge,'" Smith said. "So that's where I go get my education now, hanging out with the old guys. They remember these games better than I do from back in the day.

"I have to buy them coffee because they tell me how many times they gave me a ride home from practice or a ride home from the baseball games, so I have to pay them back."

Smith was one of six players inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2019, joining Rivera, Roy Halladay, Edgar Martinez, Mike Mussina and Baines.

"I told Billy (Williams) that it hasn't sunk in yet," Smith said prior to being inducted. "He said, 'You know what, until you walk out of that hotel in Cooperstown and get on that bus with all those other Hall of Famers, then it'll sink in.' I talked to Roberto Alomar, and he said, 'Just think about where you came from, how many years you played, how many guys you played with, how many guys you played against. Think about how many got into the Hall of Fame. Not that many.'"

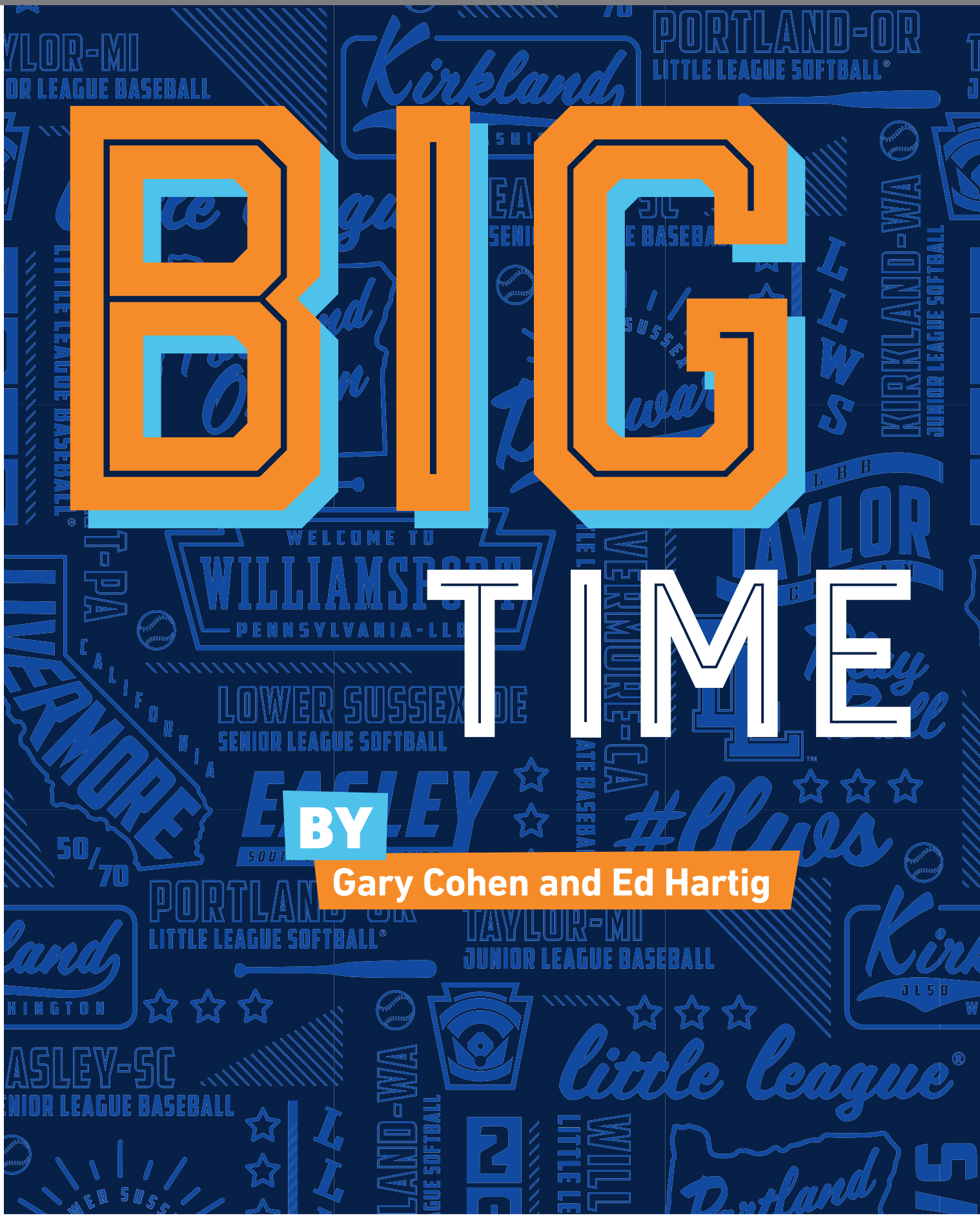
Smith meets with the media after he was elected to join the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Before joining the greats in Cooperstown last summer, Smith got a sneak peek at the Hall of Fame when he toured the facility in February 2019. He thought about the players he never had a chance to see like Al Kaline and Bob Feller and Robin Roberts.

"You look at their background, and most of those guys were country boys like me," Smith said. "Nowadays, the game has changed where if you don't go to a big school, you don't get a chance to get looked at. Back in the day, we picked up guys playing sandlot ball and guys playing Legion ball.

"I never dreamed of making it to the Hall of Fame. I was just trying to figure this pitching thing out, and I was like, 'Man, I want to get to the big leagues for a couple years and maybe come back home and be a high school basketball coach.' That was my lifelong dream."

Now, he's a Hall of Famer.



BIG TIME

BY

Gary Cohen and Ed Hartig

There was nothing small about these future Cubs' performances in the Little League World Series.

The best players in the world all have to start somewhere. They just don't materialize fully formed on baseball's biggest stage. They're built on dusty diamonds and bountiful backfields located all around the globe.

Since 1947, the best of these young players, ages 10-12, have converged on Williamsport, Pennsylvania, every August to compete in the Little League World Series (LLWS). Initially, the tournament was limited to just teams from the U.S., but it has since grown into a worldwide phenomenon, broadcast annually on ESPN and watched by millions of fans hoping to catch their first glimpse of baseball's next wave of talent.

Over the years, the LLWS has showcased incredible young athletes, including future major league stars such as Gary Sheffield, Todd Frazier, Michael Conforto, Jurickson Profar and Cody Bellinger. Seven Cubs have also sharpened their skills in Williamsport.

To celebrate the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat (on a Little League scale), we look back at how these future North Siders performed under the national spotlight for the first time in their careers.

1954

BILLY CONNORS, KEN HUBBS

Billy Connors

Ken Hubbs

The 1954 LLWS championship game featured two future Cubs: pitcher Billy Connors, playing for National Little League from Schenectady, New York, and second baseman Ken Hubbs, playing for Lions Club Little League from Colton, California.

Connors' group, which also included future major leaguer Jim Barbieri, reached the championship game by beating a Lakeland, Florida, team that included future big leaguers Boog Powell and Carl Taylor, 16-0, and then taking down Masontown, Pennsylvania, 7-3. The Colton squad beat Hampton, Virginia, 4-2, and Melrose Park, Illinois, 8-1, behind Hubbs' stellar pitching.

New York's strength was also its pitching, which was led by the "Twin Bills," a reference to Connors and Billy Masucci, son of one of the New York coaches. In an era without pitch counts, the "Twin Bills" threw all but one inning during qualifying, tossing six shutouts and two no-hitters. Schenectady, which had lost in the championship game the year before, was the favorite heading into the finale versus Colton.

New York jumped out to a 5-0 lead through two innings and fended off a late Colton rally for a 7-5 win to take home the crown. Connors went 1-for-3 with a run scored and an RBI. Hubbs went 2-for-4 with two runs, a home run and an RBI.

Hubbs also made the defensive play of the game at shortstop. On a pop fly to short-center, the future NL Rookie of the Year stumbled backward and managed to get a glove on the ball as he was falling down. The ball bounced out of his glove, but Hubbs turned his body in midair and caught it in his bare hand just before it touched the grass. The catch drew raves on the TV broadcast, with venerable Yankees announcer Mel Allen giving it his patented "How about that?" call.

And Hubbs did all this despite playing with a broken toe, suffered when he stepped in a hole at a picnic celebrating Colton's advancement to Williamsport.

1958 HECTOR TORRES

Long before he embarked on his nine-year big league career, future Cubs infielder Hector Torres starred for Industrial Little League out of Monterrey, Mexico, leading his team to the 1958 title. Though he spent most of his pro career as a middle infielder, Torres did his Little League damage on the mound.

With the win, Torres' Mexican club became the first to ever capture back-to-back Little League titles. Monterrey bested teams from Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, 11-0, and Darien, Connecticut, 11-5, to reach the championship game.

Torres, whose father was a longtime player and manager in Mexican pro ball, fanned 11 batters and allowed only three hits in a complete game, 10-1 victory over Kankakee Jaycee Little League of Illinois in the final.

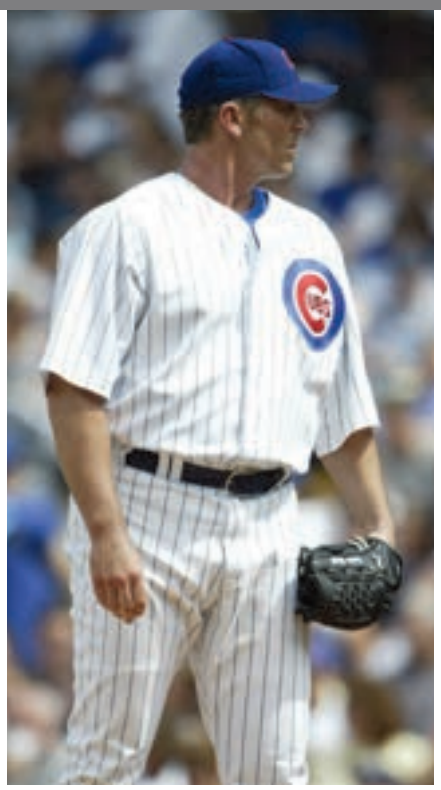
1971 LLOYD McCLENDON

Few have ever made a bigger splash in the LLWS than Lloyd McClendon, who dominated the 1971 tournament, earning himself the nickname "Legendary Lloyd." The future Cubs outfielder nearly pitched and clubbed his Anderson Little League team from Gary, Indiana, to the championship but fell just short in the title contest. In three games in Williamsport, McClendon recorded five at-bats ... and hammered home runs in all five of them. Unfortunately, opposing teams eventually figured out the secret to beating Gary — walk McClendon.

Gary beat Lexington, Kentucky, 7-2, and Madrid, Spain, 7-0, to advance to the title game against Tainan City Little League from Taiwan. Taiwan won the game, 12-3, in nine innings in the first championship contest ever decided in extras.

McClendon's three-run homer in the first inning gave Gary an early 3-0 lead. That would be all the offense for the Gary squad, however, as they notched only one other hit. Having seen McClendon's power, Taiwan wisely decided to walk him in each subsequent at-bat. McClendon finished the tourney with five walks in addition to his five homers, posting a 1.000 batting average and on-base percentage, and a 4.000 slugging percentage.

On the mound, McClendon dominated Taiwan's lineup, fanning 12 batters before faltering in the ninth inning. The big right-hander was as much a power pitcher as he was a power hitter. His beleaguered catcher battled through 10 passed balls on the day. The Taiwanese pitcher was a little better, striking out 22 Gary batters while allowing only two hits.



1978

DAVE VERES

The 1978 LLWS didn't quite go as future Cubs right-hander Dave Veres envisioned. Veres' father, John, was in the Air Force and was stationed at the Torrejon Air Base in Madrid, Spain. Veres played for the Torrejon Air Base Little League team, which swept through the European Region and came into Williamsport confident and ready.

But Torrejon lost its mojo when it reached U.S. shores. The team was outscored 27-0 in three games, losing to clubs from the Dominican Republic, New York and Palatine, Illinois.

Veres would become just the second future major league player to come from a foreign-based Little League, following fellow Cub Hector Torres.

1983

MARC PISCIOTTA

Future Cubs pitcher Marc Pisciotta's East Marietta National Little League out of Georgia rolled through the South Region, going 11-0 to qualify for Williamsport. And that roll didn't stop once they reached Pennsylvania. East Marietta beat Jackie Robinson West Little League from Chicago, 7-2, in the opener and then held off Stamford, Connecticut, 9-8, to reach the championship game.

Pitching before 40,000 fans, the 12-year-old Pisciotta, who already stood 6-foot-2, scattered six hits and fanned five. His complete-game effort carried East Marietta past Liquito Hernandez Little League of the Dominican Republic, 3-1, for the title. The big right-hander also helped turn a double play on defense to shut down an early rally and knocked in a run at the plate.

1991

JASON MARQUIS

South Shore American Little League out of Staten Island, New York, finished third in the 1991 LLWS on the strength of future Cub Jason Marquis' arm. With Marquis toeing the rubber, South Shore won their opening game over Hamilton, Ohio, 8-0. Without Marquis on the mound in Game 2, they lost 13-4 to Danville, California.

The longtime big-league starter tossed his second shutout in the third-place game, no-hitting Glace Bay Little League from Nova Scotia, Canada, en route to a 16-0 South Shore win. He was just the sixth pitcher to toss two shutouts in a single LLWS. At the plate, Marquis, a career .196 hitter in the bigs, went 8-for-12 over three games.

WRITTEN IN THE

We catalog the best Cubs All-Star performances from nearly nine decades of Midsummer Classics.

By Gary Cohen and Ed Hartig

STARS

Before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the brightest stars in baseball were scheduled to descend on Los Angeles' Dodger Stadium on July 14 for the 91st Major League Baseball All-Star Game. Over those nearly nine decades (for a brief stretch, there were two games held each year), Cubs players have claimed All-Star MVP awards, clubbed their way to Home Run Derby titles, and notched both key wins and saves.

We went back to the beginning and looked at every Midsummer Classic to find the best performances by Cubs players over the years. On the big stage, North Side luminaries such as Gabby Hartnett, Ernie Banks, Sammy Sosa and Kris Bryant have all shined brightly in the July spotlight.

Though there have been more than enough stellar All-Star performances from Cubs players to fill the pages of this publication, we've narrowed it down to just five (along with a few runners-up).

LET THE GREAT DEBATE BEGIN.

JULY 7, 1936

Major League Baseball played its initial All-Star Game in 1933, but it wasn't until 1936 that the NL secured its first victory. This was thanks in large part to the Cubs, who sent six players to the exhibition in Boston. Skippered by Cubs manager Charlie Grimm, the NL won 4-3 at Braves Field, with all the NL runs scored by Cubs players.

Hartnett opened up the NL attack with an RBI triple in the second, knocking in Frank Demaree. Hartnett would later score on a sacrifice fly to make it 2-0. Augie Galan made it 3-0 in the fifth when he hit a controversial home run down the right-field line off Tigers righty Schoolboy Rowe. One umpire called the ball foul while another called it fair. The homer ultimately would help prompt a new rule that a home run call should be based on where the ball goes past the foul pole and not where it lands. Billy Herman followed Galan's blast with a single and later scored on a Joe Medwick single to give the NL a 4-0 cushion. Overall, Cubs batters went 5-for-14 with four runs, two RBI and 10 total bases.

The AL battled back in the seventh inning off Cubs pitcher Curt Davis, plating three runs to close the gap. But another Cubs hurler, Lon Warneke, snuffed out the seventh-inning rally and held the AL scoreless for the final 2.1 frames.

JULY 11, 1960

For the 1960 Cubs, it was all about Ernie Banks. The team won a paltry 60 games, Ron Santo and Billy Williams were just getting their first taste of big-league action, and Don Zimmer was still manning the infield. Banks, coming off back-to-back MVP Awards in 1958-59, was the

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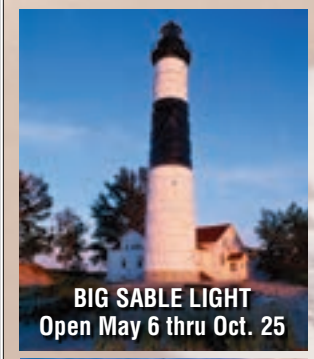
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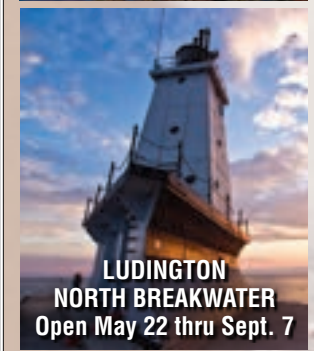
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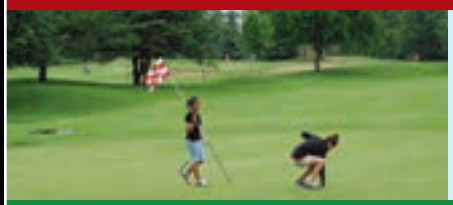

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team's only selection to the 1960 All-Star Game at the Kansas City Athletics' Municipal Stadium.

Technically, he was the Cubs' sole selection for *both* All-Star games. From 1959-62, Major League Baseball held two All-Star games per year as a way to raise money for the players' pension fund. But it was in the first of these that Banks' star shined brightest.

The NL won the game 5-3, and Mr. Cub was responsible for much of his squad's offensive output.

Banks blasted a two-run home run to deep left field off Boston's Bill Monbouquette in the first inning to stake the NL to a 3-0 lead. He later doubled and scored to extend the lead to 5-0. In the field, he handled five chances at shortstop and started a sixth-inning double play that thwarted an AL rally.

Banks is the only Cubs player in history with multiple extra-base hits in an All-Star contest. He also had two extra-base hits in the first All-Star Game in 1959.

★ ★ ★ ★ JULY 14, 1987

The 1987 season wasn't overly memorable on the North Side of Chicago, as the Cubs finished dead last in the NL East with a 76-85 record. That campaign, however, was marked by outstanding individual performances.

None was more noteworthy than that of Andre Dawson, who finally escaped the brutal Olympic Stadium turf in Montreal to sign his famed blank contract with the

Cubs. That season, the 32-year-old Hawk, who went on to win the NL MVP, earned the first of his five All-Star nods as a Cub.

Joining Dawson at Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum were Ryne Sandberg, Rick Sutcliffe and Lee Smith. Dawson, who was voted into the starting lineup along with Sandberg, lined a double down the left-field line off Royals starter Bret Saberhagen in the first inning.

But the 1987 contest was primarily about pitching, with the NL notching a 2-0 victory in 13 innings. Sutcliffe was the second man on the mound for the NL and delivered two scoreless frames. Smith came on in the 10th to log three scoreless of his own. Big Lee struck out four AL hitters to pick up the win, with the Mets' Sid Fernandez recording the final three outs for the save.

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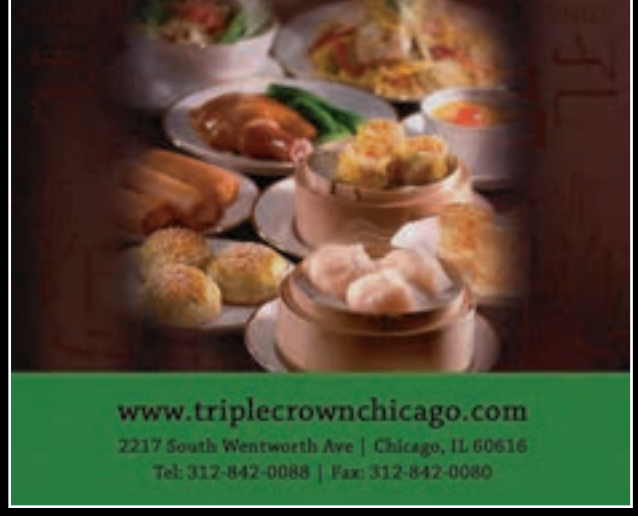

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Due to the length of the game and a scarcity of available arms, Smith was forced to hit for the NL in the top of the 13th. Since he didn't bring a batting helmet with him to Northern California, he wore an Expos lid as he struck out trying to lay down a bunt.

★ ★ ★ ★

JULY 15, 2008

The 2008 Cubs were a powerhouse that seemed destined for greatness. The club finished the year 97-64, 7.5 games ahead of the Brewers in the NL Central, before losing to the Dodgers in a heartbreaking Division Series.

While the 2008 All-Star Game may have been held at Yankee Stadium, it looked more like Wrigley Field East given the personnel involved. A club-record eight Cubs were selected — Ryan Dempster, Kosuke Fukudome, Carlos Marmol, Aramis Ramirez, Alfonso Soriano, Geovany Soto, Kerry Wood and Carlos Zambrano.

Although Fukudome, Soriano and Soto were each voted into the starting lineup, Soriano did not play due to injury. Wood was also on the shelf, which opened the door for Marmol to be added to the roster.

Cubs hitters didn't have much of an impact on the outcome, a 4-3 win by the AL in a remarkable 15 innings. Dempster, Marmol and Zambrano, however, combined to toss 4.0 scoreless innings on the night, fanning six and walking none.

In reality, there were nine Cubs in the Bronx for the four-hour-and-50-minute affair, as Cubs manager Lou Piniella was a late addition to the NL coaching staff. NL skipper Clint Hurdle, who had guided the upstart Rockies to the World Series in 2007, initially selected the Mets' Willie Randolph and the Padres' Bud Black as his coaches. But when New York unceremoniously fired Randolph on June 16, Piniella was named as his replacement.

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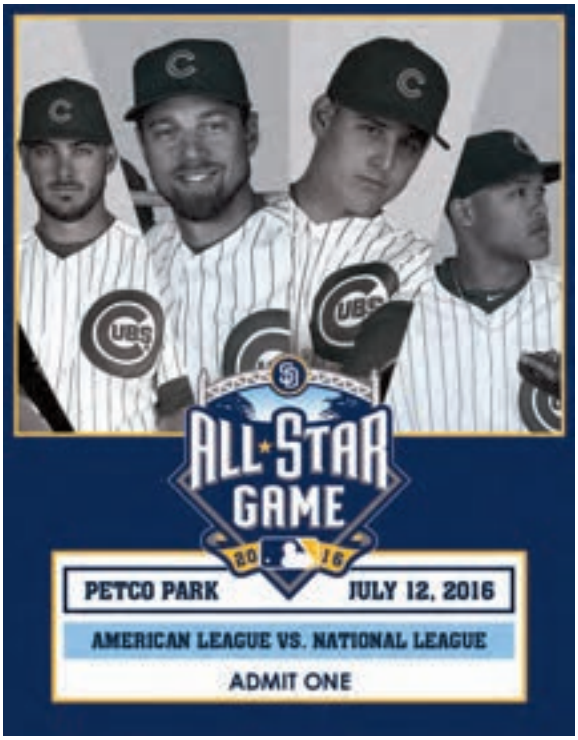
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **JULY 12, 2016**

Everything was coming up Cubs in 2016. In addition to finally putting an end to the longest championship drought in American pro sports history, the Cubs also sent seven players to the All-Star Game at Petco Park in San Diego. Five were voted in as starters, including the entire infield unit of Kris Bryant, Addison Russell, Ben Zobrist and Anthony Rizzo. Outfielder Dexter Fowler was also named a starter, but he was sidelined due to a right hamstring strain. The Cubs became the first NL team to have their entire infield start an All-Star Game since the 1963 Cardinals.

"It's pretty impressive because as a kid back then, I was blown away by that," said then-Cubs manager Joe Maddon of that Cardinals group. "Any 9-year-old seeing this Cubs infield go, I'd like to believe they felt exactly as I felt in 1963."

On the pitching side, the Cubs sent 2015 Cy Young winner Jake Arrieta and Jon Lester to Southern California.



And the Cubs players weren't just window dressing. University of San Diego alum Kris Bryant opened up the NL scoring by taking White Sox ace Chris Sale deep in the first inning. Rizzo, who was the NL's top vote-getter, singled to right off the Blue Jays' Aaron Sanchez in the fourth, and Lester tossed 0.2 frames of scoreless ball. ★

BEST OF THE REST

Phil Cavarretta — 1944

Cavarretta sets an All-Star record by reaching base five consecutive times in a 7-1 NL win. The Cubs first baseman had a triple, single and three walks, in addition to 12 putouts in the field.

Bob Rush — 1952

Rush becomes the first Cubs pitcher to record a win in the All-Star Game, tossing two innings and giving up two runs in a rain-shortened affair. Hank Sauer hits a two-run homer to give the NL a 3-2 win in five innings.

Jim Hickman — 1970

Hickman delivers the game-winning hit, the third by a Cubs batter in the game, singling to center to give the NL a 5-4 victory in 12 innings. Pete Rose famously crashes into Cleveland catcher Ray Fosse to score the winning run.

Bill Madlock — 1975

Tied 3-3 in the top of the ninth, the NL scores three times for a 6-3 victory. With White Sox fireballer Goose Gossage on the mound, Madlock singles to drive in the go-ahead runs. Madlock and Mets pitcher Jon Matlack are named co-MVPs.

Bruce Sutter — 1980

Sutter preserves a 4-2 NL win, tossing two shutout innings to pick up the save. With the wins he posted in the previous two All-Star games, Sutter's three-year totals include 5.2 scoreless innings, six strikeouts and only two hits allowed.

Sammy Sosa — 2000

Sosa wins the Home Run Derby with a then-record 26 round-trippers. He hits six in the opening round and 11 in the semifinals before finishing off Ken Griffey Jr., 9-2, in the final. He becomes the third Cub to win the derby, joining Andre Dawson and Ryne Sandberg.

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THE SLUGFEST

By Gary Cohen & Ed Hartig

On May 17, 1979, the Cubs and Phillies played one of the wildest games in modern baseball history.

SP	RP	INNING	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
47	49	PHILADELPHIA	7	0	8	2	4	0	1	0	0	1	23
47	42	CUBS	6	0	0	3	7	3	0	3	0	0	22

CROSSING THE PLATE AT A RAPID RATE

By the time Bruce Sutter trotted out to the Wrigley Field mound on May 17, 1979, he had already established himself as one of the premier closers in the game. In his fourth year with the Cubs, the future Hall of Famer was performing at his peak. That season, he appeared in 62 games, finished 56, and locked down 37 saves to claim his first and only Cy Young Award.

Sutter used the revolutionary split-finger fastball and pinpoint control to flummox opposing lineups and impose order on ballgames. Never was order more necessary than on that windy May afternoon at Wrigley Field. When Sutter was called upon in the top of the ninth, the Cubs and Phillies were knotted at an unimaginable 22-22.

The right-hander made it through the ninth safely, surrendering only a walk, and recorded two quick outs in the 10th before facing noted Cubs killer Michael Jack Schmidt. Sutter left a 3-2 split-finger pitch over the heart of the plate, and the Hall of Fame slugger quickly deposited it into the left-center-field bleachers for his second homer of the day, giving the Fightin' Phils the cushion they would need to (mercifully) finish off the game, 23-22.

"The pitch was up and inside," said Sutter after the game. "I didn't ever turn around to look at it. I knew exactly where it was going."

It has now been more than 40 years since two of baseball's most storied franchises put up a score more befitting of the gridiron than the diamond. But that historic 1979 contest, broadcast on WGN-TV and attended by 14,952 intrepid Cubs supporters, has since become a fan favorite and lives on thanks to streaming services like YouTube. Of course, softball-like scores are nothing new when it comes to the Cubs and Phillies.

Entering 2020, the Cubs franchise's two highest-scoring games were also the two highest-scoring games in big league history, and both involved the Phillies. The only crazier game than the 1979 affair was a 1922 matchup against Philadelphia, again at Wrigley Field, that the Cubs won 26-23. That slugfest saw Chicago plate 10 second-inning runs before scoring a whopping 14 runs in the fourth inning.

If you want to find a higher-scoring affair, you have to go all the way back to the pre-NL days of the National Association, when pitchers delivered the ball underhand and fielders didn't wear gloves.

In the two teams' long history — their first contest was on May 11, 1883, and the Cubs entered 2020 leading the all-time series 1,234-1,115 — Chicago and Philadelphia have combined for at least 30 runs six times.

Dave Kingman rounds the bases in the sixth inning after hitting his third home run of the game.

Bruce Sutter pitches with the game tied at 22 in the ninth inning.

WIND-AIDED

Generations of Cubs pitchers have all understood a simple Wrigley Field maxim: Fear the south wind.

Cubs starter Dennis Lamp entered that May 17 game with a 3-0 record, but he had been fighting a blister in the season's early going. Although it might have been a good day to nurse that injury — the wind was roaring out to left field at 17 miles per hour, and the game was being umpired by replacements due to a labor dispute — Lamp declared himself OK to pitch and took his normal turn in the rotation.

If the Cubs righty didn't like the conditions, he didn't have to bear them for very long, as he lasted only 0.1 innings. The Phillies jumped all over Lamp, with six of the first seven batters reaching base safely and Mike Schmidt and Bob Boone blasting dueling three-run homers. Donnie Moore replaced Lamp and recorded a strikeout before opposing pitcher Randy Lerch took him deep to make it 7-0.

"This game is four days old," said Cubs broadcaster Jack Brickhouse during the Phillies' long first inning, "and the Cubs haven't batted yet."

But Lerch didn't fare much better when it was his turn on the bump. The Cubs struck back quickly, as Ivan DeJesus, Mike Vail and Bill Buckner all singled. With one run across, slugger Dave Kingman, who would go on to tally 48 homers on the season, deposited a three-run shot into the bleachers. Lerch did manage to record one out before giving up a double to Jerry Martin and being sent to the showers. A Ted Sizemore single off Doug Bird and a triple by Moore soon made it 7-6.

"THIS GAME IS FOUR DAYS OLD, AND THE CUBS HAVEN'T BATTED YET."

—JACK BRICKHOUSE,
CUBS TV BROADCASTER

"Two games before, Lerch pitched pretty good, and he was complaining," said Phillies shortstop Larry Bowa. "He said, 'It would be nice if we'd get some runs.' So we get seven runs for him that day at Wrigley, and I go by the mound before he pitches and say sarcastically, 'Is that enough for you?'"

The starting pitchers combined to record just two outs, allowing 11 hits and 11 earned runs. From there, the slugfest only intensified. During the four-hour-and-three-minute ballgame, the teams totaled 45 runs, 50 hits, 10 doubles, two triples, 11 home runs, 15 walks and one hit batsman — all good for 97 total bases.

By the top of the fourth inning, the Phillies had taken a commanding 17-6 lead, but even that wasn't enough to seal the deal. The Cubs got three runs in the bottom of the frame on back-to-back homers by Kingman and Steve Ontiveros, but the Phillies quickly put up another four spot in the top of the fifth.

Between the fifth and sixth innings, the North Siders scored 10 unanswered runs to close the gap to 21-19. Phillies pitcher Tug McGraw, who entered in the fifth inning, allowed seven runs in two-thirds of a frame on three walks and four hits. That included a grand slam by Bill Buckner and a solo shot by Jerry Martin.

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EPA

"It's funny: I mean, when you're sitting out there in the 'pen and you see the way things are going, you don't exactly beg to come in the game," said McGraw, a two-time All-Star who would go on to close out the 1980 World Series for the Phillies. "And, yet, all the time you're saying to yourself, 'Well, I know I could stop all of this foolishness.' So what happens? I get my chance to stop it and [boom]!"

The Phillies extended their lead to 22-19 in the seventh on a Bob Boone run-scoring double off Bill Caudill, spurring the Cubs to bring in Ray Burris. The right-hander responded by tossing 1.2 scoreless innings, becoming the only Cubs pitcher on the day to escape without allowing a run.

The Cubs fought back to tie things up at 22-22 in the eighth on five singles, and that's where things would remain until Schmidt took Sutter deep in the 10th. In total, there were five half innings wherein a team sent at least 10 batters to the plate, but only twice did an offense go down in order — the Cubs in both the ninth and tenth innings.

The Phillies deployed journeyman right-hander Rawly Eastwick for those final two frames, and he earned a well-deserved win for his efforts. Sutter, who allowed one hit (Schmidt's homer) and a walk in 2.0 innings, was tagged with the loss.

BY THE NUMBERS

Just how much offense was produced on that windy day at Wrigley Field? Between the Cubs and Phillies, 22 players logged at least one hit, and 13 men tallied at least two. Bowa led the way with five. The only player in either starting lineup without a hit was Lamp, who was removed from the game before he ever had a chance to bat. But Donnie Moore, who relieved him, tripled the first time the pitcher's spot came up for the Cubs.

Twenty-one players scored at least one run, and 18 had at least one RBI. Bill Buckner, who went 4-for-7 with a homer, drove in a game-leading seven, and Dave Kingman, who went 3-for-6 with three home runs, knocked in six in the losing cause.

This extraordinary game has become the stuff of legend not only for its sheer offensive output — unmatched since — but also for its incredible cast of characters and back-and-forth nature. In all, 11 pitchers toed the rubber, with the Phillies' Bird going the longest, at 3.2 innings.

"After this one," quipped Phillies manager Danny Ozark after the game, "I guess we proved the National League can get by without using a designated hitter."

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

KEEPING SCORE

BILL BUCKNER

AB	R	H	RBI
7	2	4	7

DAVE KINGMAN

AB	R	H	RBI
6	4	3	6

TOTAL PLAYERS WITH AT LEAST

1 H	2 H	1 R	1 RBI
22	13	21	18

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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24 MIL 6:10	25 MIL 12:05
26 MIL 1:20	27 CIN 5:40	28 CIN 5:40	29 CIN 5:40	30 CIN 5:10	31 PIT 7:15	

AUGUST

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1 PIT 7:15
2 PIT 1:20	3 KC 7:15	4 KC 7:15	5 KC 7:05	6 KC 6:07	7 STL 7:15	8 STL 7:15
9 STL 6:08	10	11 CLE 6:10	12 CLE 5:10	13 MIL 3:05	14 MIL 7:15	15 MIL 7:15
16 MIL 1:20	17 STL 7:15	18 STL 7:15	19 STL 7:15	20	21 CWS 7:15	22 CWS 7:15
23 CWS 1:20	24 DET 6:10	25 DET 6:10	26 DET 6:10	27	28 CIN 6:10	29 CIN 5:10
30 CIN 12:10	31					

SEPTEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 PIT 6:05	2 PIT 6:05	3 PIT 12:35	4 STL 7:15	5 STL 7:15
6 STL 6:08	7 STL 3:10 Labor Day	8 CIN 7:15	9 CIN 7:15	10 CIN 7:15	11 MIL 7:10	12 MIL 6:10
13 MIL 1:10	14	15 CLE 7:15	16 CLE 7:15	17	18 MIN 7:15	19 MIN 7:15
20 MIN 1:20	21 PIT 6:05	22 PIT 6:05	23 PIT 6:05	24 PIT 6:05	25 CWS 7:10	26 CWS 6:10
27 CWS 2:10	28	29	30			

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